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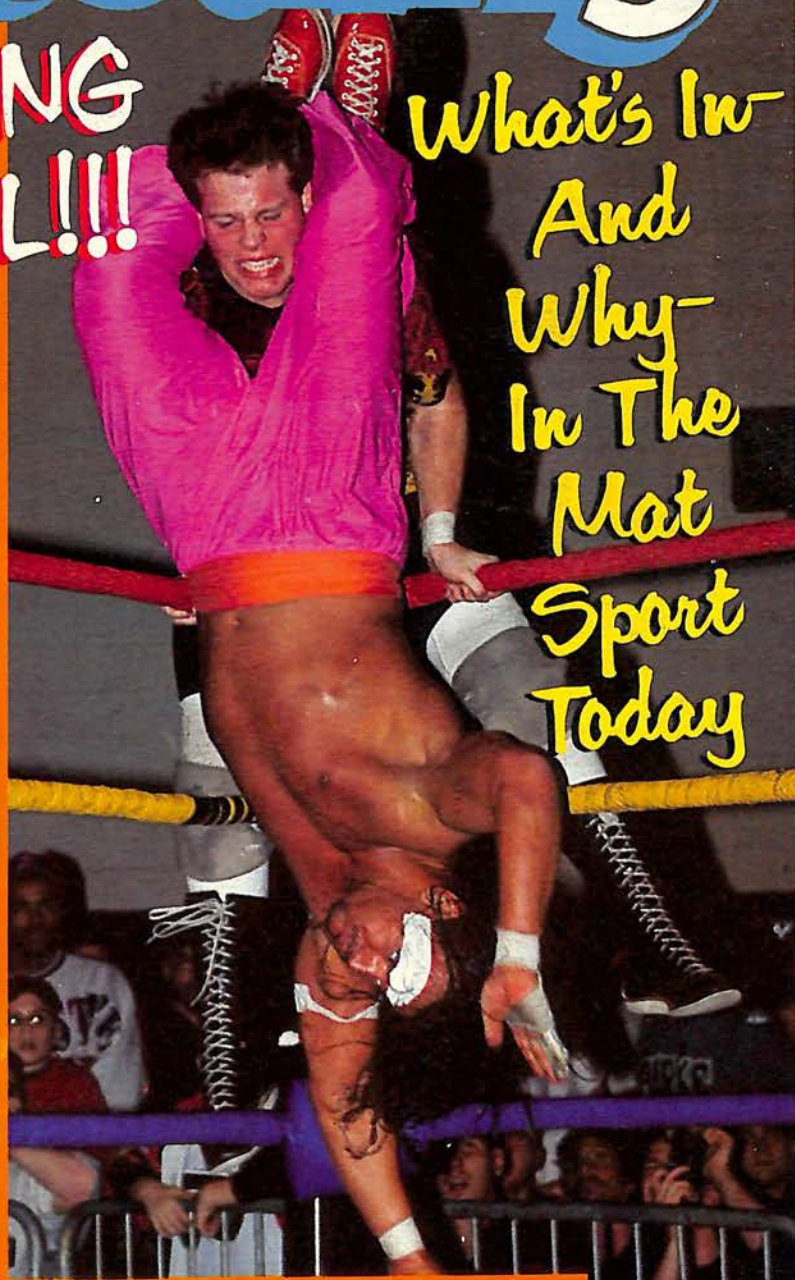
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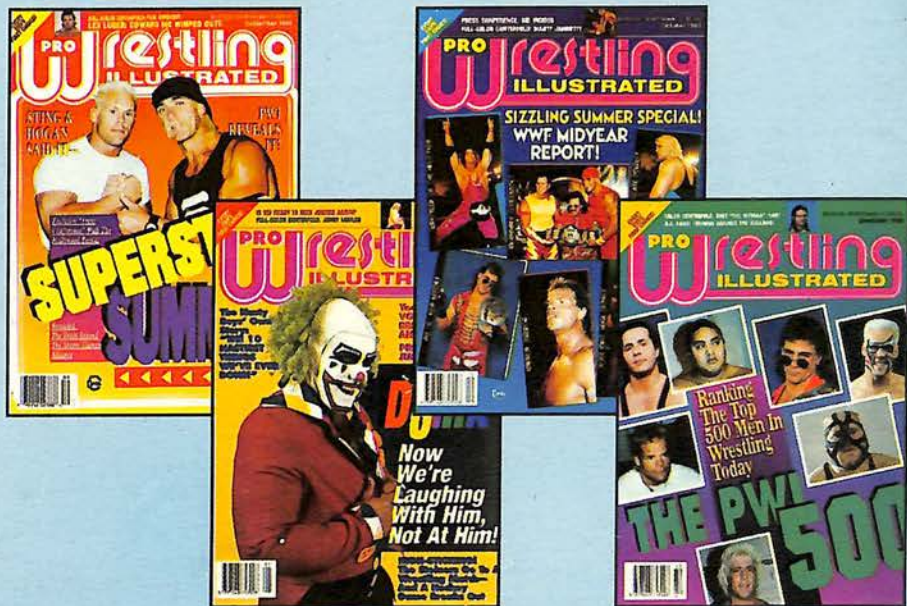
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Inside Wrestling®

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Sincerely Yours

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Most WWF fans can't stand to listen to Jerry Lawler's tirades. Reader Harry Simon, however, will always respect "The King" for all he has accomplished in Memphis over the years.

LAWLER'S LEGACY

That "Hotseat" interview with Jerry Lawler was classic "King" ("Jerry Lawler: 'INSIDE WRESTLING'S Readers Couldn't Spell I.Q.!' " April 1995). It bothers me, though, to see Lawler's name a mainstay on the "Most Hated" list in your magazine. For that matter, Lawler's whole WWF persona leaves a proverbial bitter taste in my mouth.

A whole generation of fans aren't going to remember Lawler as the legend who constantly sold out the Mid-South Coliseum. They won't know Andy Kaufman from Adam ... or Eve, for that matter.

Kirk and midget clowns. This is nothing short of a tragedy.

Well "King," this is one loyal "peon" who knows the true legacy of Jerry Lawler. And I don't plan on letting anyone forget. Long live "The King!"

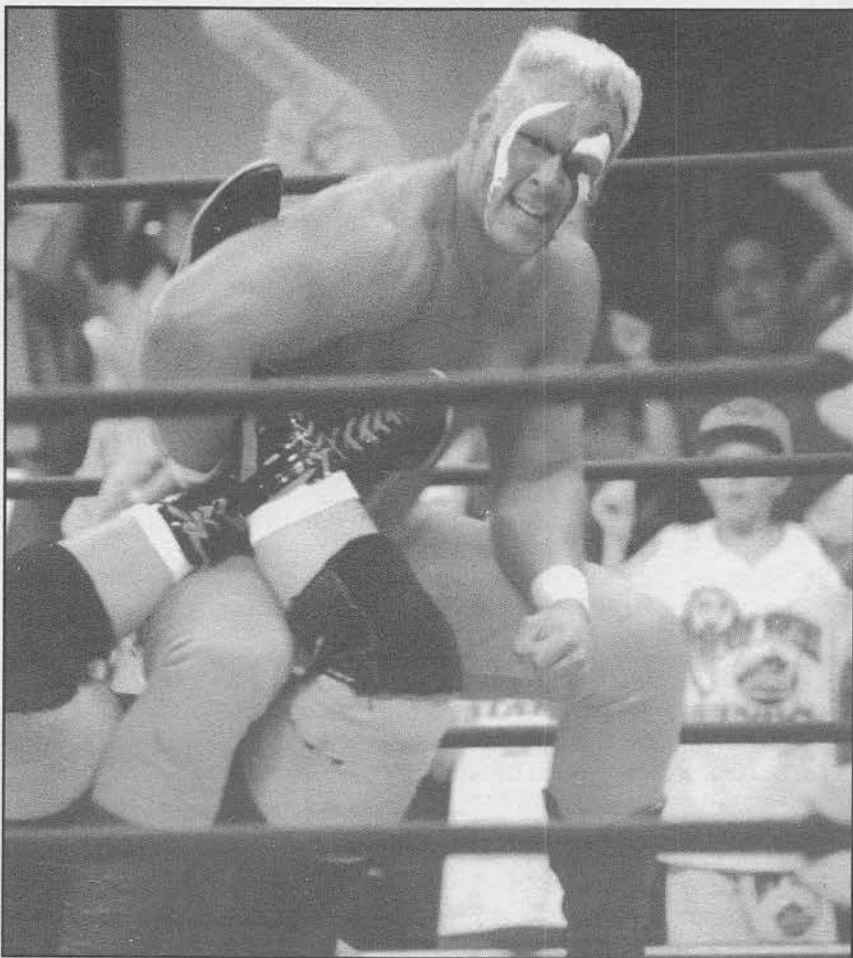
HARRY SIMON
Las Vegas, NV

STING TO WWF?

I couldn't agree more with the people who say Sting should go on to bigger and better things, specifically the WWF World title. I really think this is the year that Sting will "cross the border," so to speak, and move on to the WWF. This would be a great move on his part, because Sting has been going nowhere in WCW.

With Hulk Hogan as World

They will have no recollection of Lawler touring the globe, putting the "World" back in the AWA World title. At the peak of his career, Lawler could beat anybody. But don't expect WWF fans to remember that. Nope, they'll think back to the "Burger King" who was humiliated by Captain



With Hulk Hogan dominating WCW, Sting's career is going nowhere fast, notes reader Felix Rodriguez. Like many others, he suggests Sting jump to the WWF.

champion and Vader lurking behind him, followed by a long list of contenders, Sting will never get his shot at the gold. If Sting stays in WCW, he is only going to be feuding with Hogan's adversaries all year. If he made the move to the WWF, he could dominate the federation easily. Imagine the main event for the 1995 King of the Ring: Diesel or Shawn Michaels against Sting for the World title! I think it's going to be a great summer for the greatest promotion in the world, the WWF, but only if they get Sting.

FELIX RODRIGUEZ
Ridgewood, NY

LIST OF CONTENDERS

Everyone has made lists of who they think will be the next WWF World champion. Why is Razor

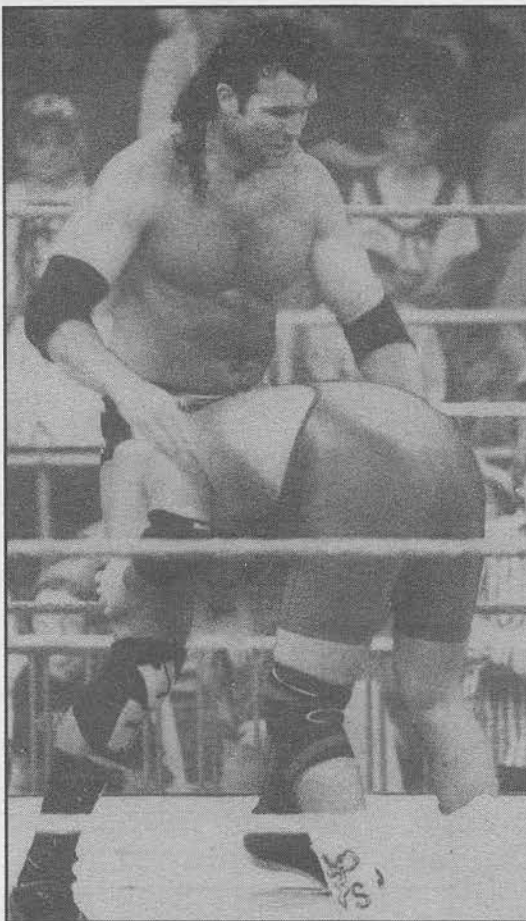
Ramon never mentioned? Ramon was one of the best Intercontinental champions ever. He defeated every challenger who faced him. He would certainly beat Diesel if he got another shot at him. He would definitely beat Shawn Michaels—he has many times before. He would tear apart any champion, just as long as he had the chance.

Another potential threat to the WWF World championship belt is Lex Luger. He is primed and ready for a title shot. It is about time he got the chance to prove himself again.

ROY BARNETT
St. Clair, MI

MABEL'S MADNESS

Mabel is finally starting to come



Razor Ramon was a dominant force during both of his Intercontinental title reigns, observes reader Roy Barnett, who can't understand why few people look at the "Bad Guy" as future world champ.

around ("Man On A Mission Of Mayhem: The Night Mabel Went Mad," May 1995). Now that both he and Mo have snapped and become rulebreakers, we are about to see the best tag team ever really start to accomplish something. These two guys definitely needed a spark to get them fired up. Now that they finally have some momentum, they will become the best team in wrestling today.

Imagine the two of them ripping through opponents, taking every opposing team apart. Men on a Mission will annihilate The Smokin' Gunns. Bob Holly and The Kid will soon be ruined. Eli and Jacob Blu will definitely be rubbed out. Soon there will be no formidable competition for them,

that is, unless The Road Warriors make a comeback. Keep up the mean streak, Mabel and Mo. Your anger will help you eliminate all your competition.

APRIL JACKSON
Reading, PA

TITLE BOUND

Shawn Michaels has, without a doubt, turned himself into the top wrestler in the world today ("Shawn Michaels Exposed," May 1995). I agree that the mystique of Michaels isn't just his wrestling. He is a sophisticated, intelligent man who does everything a certain way so that he can always be



Mabel and his tag team partner, Mo, recently turned rulebreaker, and reader April Jackson thinks it was a good career move. She predicts they will start to dominate the other tag teams in the WWF.

sure he'll come out on top in the long run. He has a master plan for his career, and I think he picks and chooses what titles he will win and when exactly he will win them.

With the acquisition of Sid Vicious as his latest bodyguard, Shawn will be almost impossible

(Continued on page 72)

REPORTER'S NOTEBOOK

By Stu Saks

Blaze, Blaze, and Blayze. Sounds like a hot law firm, doesn't it? Actually it is the surname used by three unrelated wrestlers who have been on my mind lately.

Bobby Blaze woke up the morning of February 26, looked at himself in the mirror, and saw a semi-successful mid-level wrestler. That day, he was scheduled to meet preliminary wrestler Bryan Logan in a fairly easy bout at a Smoky Mountain Wrestling card at the Civic Coliseum in Knoxville, Tennessee. Well, when he looked in the mirror again that evening, he saw a very tired, slightly beat-up man, but he also saw a championship belt.

Tony Anthony had been scheduled to challenge Jerry Lawler for the SMW belt, but the "Dirty White Boy" was injured by Buddy Landell, and Blaze was chosen as his replacement. In what has to be considered one of the great wrestling upsets (even though Blaze had a little help from Landell), Bobby pinned "The King" and won the title. Later on the card, Blaze came back one more time, pinning Landell with some help from Anthony. Not the cleanest hat trick, but it was the greatest day of this young man's career.

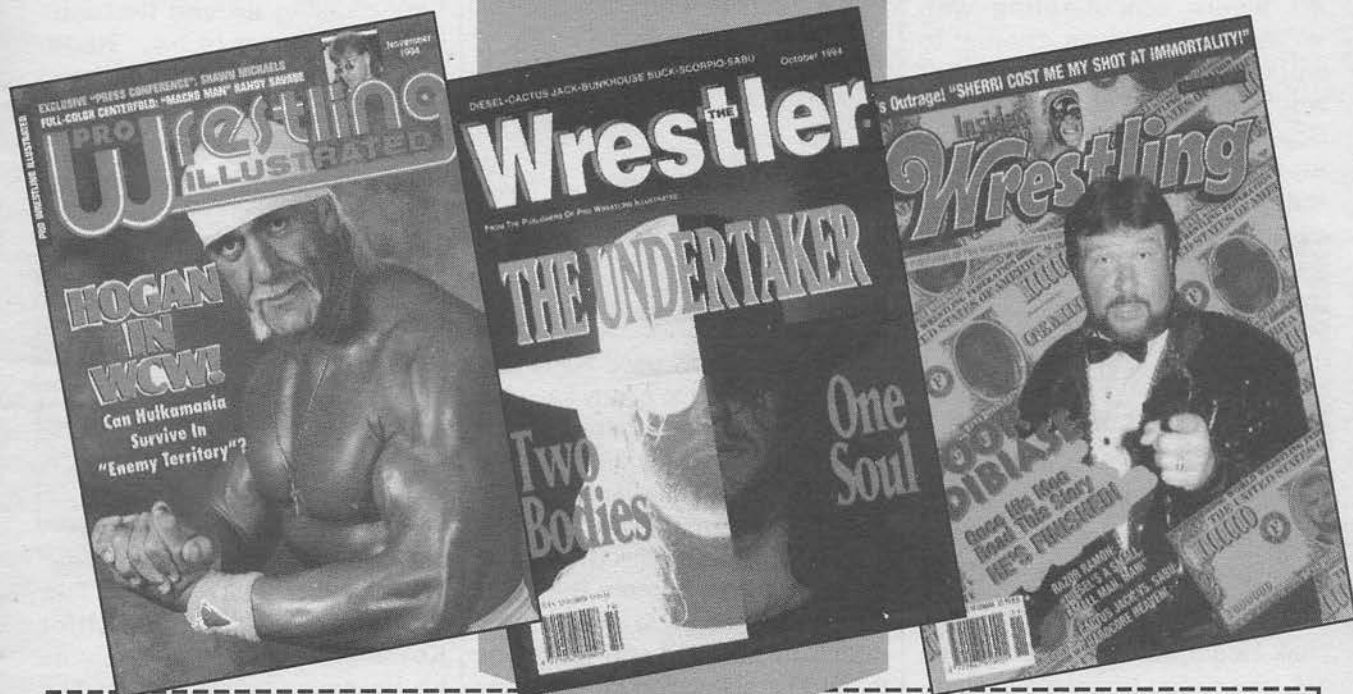
Things were going well for **Tim Blaze**, whose career was picking up speed as Mid-Atlantic champion in Atlantic Championship Wrestling. Then he made a mistake he might regret for the rest of his life. Blaze and a band of thugs that included Brian Bruise and Bonecrusher Curtis attacked ACW broadcasters in Martinsville, Virginia.

Blaze might not have masterminded the senseless attack, but he certainly had the most to lose. I bet he'll miss the \$5,000 he was fined, but I bet he'll miss that championship belt ACW officials ruled he had to forfeit even more!

Alundra Blayze probably wishes she had a belt to forfeit. But the WWF World women's belt she once proclaimed in her cocky manner to be "on loan" to Bull Nakano seems beyond her grasp at this point. Alundra, deeply embarrassed by the situation, recently hinted that she is going to give up her quest, let somebody else beat Nakano, and then challenge her. That would be a huge mistake. If Alundra is ever going to re-establish herself as the numberone wrestler in the women's ranks, she has to cut the bull and blaze a path right through Nakano.

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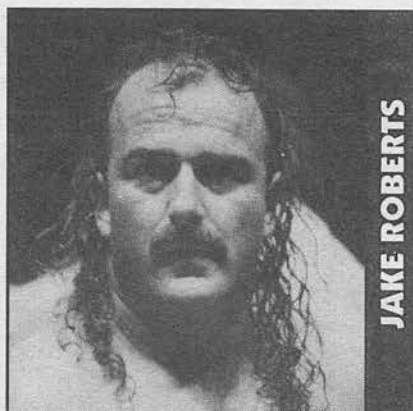
AS THIS MAGAZINE went to press, **Ric Flair's** attorneys were still meeting with WCW officials in an attempt to work out an agreement that would allow the retired "Nature Boy" to return to the federation as an active competitor. Flair, who lost a "loser-must-retain" match to



RIC FLAIR

Hulk Hogan at Halloween Havoc '94, was slated to wrestle in North Korea and Japan this spring. Commenting on those wrestling dates, one member of Flair's legal team said, "We cannot comment on those commitments at this time, but Mr. Flair will appear."

Jake "The Snake" Roberts has announced his retirement. See "Where Are They Now" on page 20 for details ... **Miguel Perez Jr.** has signed with the WWF ... Feuding brothers **Ian** and **Axl Rotten** are begging ECW promoters to sign a match in which they can use shards of broken glass on each other ... **Chief Jay Strongbow** told me that he will not make a comeback to wrestle **Tatanka**. Rumors to the contrary surfaced when Strongbow was attacked by Tatanka at ringside when he was seconding **Lex**



JAKE ROBERTS

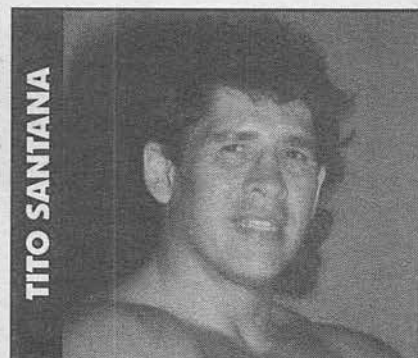
Luger. Strongbow used his famed tomahawk chops to nearly kayo his former protege and is quick to add, "I am retired and intend to stay that way. But if Tatanka lays another hand on me, I will retaliate again!"

PG-13 regained the USWA tag team belts from **Tommy Rich** and **Doug Gilbert** in a steel cage match in March—and lucky for them! The stipulation in their contract said if they lost, they would have had to leave the USWA for five years! ... The Ladies International Wrestling Association's annual convention will be held in Las Vegas June 8 to 10. **Fabulous Moolah**, **Vicki Williams**, and **Fran Gravette** will be three of the women honored. Among the male wrestlers scheduled to be honored are **The Destroyer**, **Pat Patterson**, and **Lord Randolph Whitmore III**.

Windy City Wrestling's notorious masked man, **The Fallen Angel**, was recently unmasked by **Mike Anthony**. Angel turned out to be **Christopher Daniels**.

Cactus Jack has had no luck in his quest to win the Midwest Territorial Wrestling heavyweight title from **Bruiser Bedlam**. "I'm

not one to complain," Cactus pointed out, "but I spend more time chasing around that little weasel manager of his, "**Handsome**" **Johnny Bradford**, than I do beating up on **Bedlam**. Hey, creep, if you're reading this, stay



TITO SANTANA

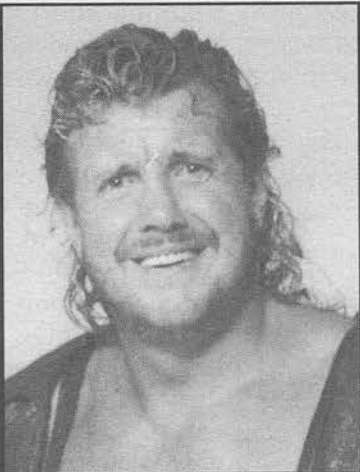
out of my way, or your managerial career won't last long!" ... **Tito Santana** has asked **Killer Kowalski** to step in and referee his upcoming match against **The Bulldozer**. Bulldozer had roughed up a referee in a match against Santana earlier this year, and Tito feels Kowalski, who is licensed as a referee in the IWF, can handle anything Bulldozer can dish out.

Pan American Championship Wrestling champion **T.J. "The Bull" Jackson** says he wants at least \$25,000 up front if he is to wrestle TV champion **Johnny "Ram Man" Evans**. "It's the least PACW can do if they want to put me in against a bum like him!" Jackson screamed ... **Ron Simmons** and **2 Cold Scorpio** have teamed for several matches against **The Goodfellas** in ACW ... "**Diamond**" **Dallas Page** admits he has been having some financial problems and has had to sell most of his jewelry. His

KIN' NEWS

By Bill Apter

"DIAMOND" DALLAS PAGE

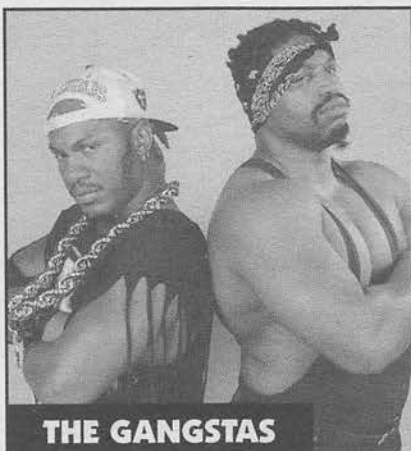


Diamond Doll, however, continues to stay at his side.

Marty Jannetty reports, "I'm having the time of my life in ECW. I've never had so much fun beating people up!" ... **Tully Blanchard** is feuding with Mid-Atlantic heavyweight champion **Doug Gibson** ... **Crazy Eddie** has won the Northern Championship Wrestling Inter-City title from **Black Bear** ... Kudos to **Stan Hansen**. The veteran brawler won Japan's Triple Crown (the PWF, United National and All-Japan belts) from **Toshiaki Kawada** in March. Hansen had won the Triple Crown four times previously ... **The Tennessee Intimidators** are gone from the AIWF. They lost a "loser-leaves-the-federation" Tennessee street fight to **The Tennessee Violence Authority**. Oddly enough, the match was held in Westville, North Carolina.

Italian Stallion has not been able to regain the Pro Wrestling Federation heavyweight belt from **Terry Austin**. "No excuses," Stallion says. "Austin is a tough man to beat" ... I cannot believe

this one: **Jim Cornette** and **Bob Armstrong** are on speaking terms. "We both hate **The Gangstas** so much that we are



THE GANGSTAS

putting together a mutually beneficial plan to rid Smoky Mountain of them for good," reports Armstrong. "I don't like Mr. Cornette, and after this little project is over, I don't plan to do any further business with him."

The blood keeps flowing in the "**Dirty White Boy**" **Tony Anthony-Buddy Landell** feud ... **Greg Valentine** is now king of International Championship Wrestling, having won the heavyweight championship from **Tito Santana**. "I'm the king of ICW, thanks to **The King!**" Valentine said, referring to his new manager, **The King**, who tips the scales at about 350 pounds and dresses like the great **Elvis Presley**. "I gave Greg the secret to winning titles," King told us. "We are an unbeatable duo!"

Smoky Mountain heavyweight champion **Bobby Blaze** told us that his skills have sharpened since he began training with

Ricky Morton and **Robert Gibson**. "They've shown me some innovative moves that will help me a lot in the ring," he said.

So what exactly is **Dick Murdoch's** reason for appearing in **Bob Backlund's** corner for many of Backlund's recent matches? "He's a butt-kickin', bone-bustin' brawler, just like me," Murdoch said. "The guy used to be such a wimp. But when I saw how nuts he was goin', it really impressed me. I'm a big fan of Mr. Backlund now. He's great" ... **Col. DeBeers** is looking for a match against Pacific Coast champion "**Mean**" **Mike Miller**. "If I do get him in the ring," DeBeers says,



"MEAN" MIKE MILLER

"don't sit in the first three rows, unless you like a lot of blood splattering on you!" DeBeers said he plans to "bleed Miller dry," and become champion. I guess that would do it.

My condolences to the family of **Big John Studd**, who succumbed to Hodgkin's disease at the age of 46. The 6'10" 364-pounder debuted in 1971 and had a tremendous career that ended in October 1993. □

BY THE TIME you read this, you already may have witnessed the comeback of one of the greatest athletes of all-time. Even if you haven't you probably will ... very soon. His sudden retirement at the peak of his popularity was a loss for the sport. Fans sensed something missing and clamored for his return. The competitive fire that burned within him was too strong to ignore.

Not Michael Jordan, you ninny. Ric Flair.

I hope Ric Flair does return to wrestling full-time. He and Hulk Hogan are the only wrestlers who can carry federations by themselves, and Flair's return means the two will again have to share the spotlight in WCW. Anything that takes some of the relentless focus off Hogan is good. But I am not happy with the frivolity with which everyone is treating the premise of retirement.

Let me see if I get this straight: Flair wrestled Hogan for the WCW World title in October, with the added stipulation that the loser would have to retire from the sport. Neither man was at gunpoint when he signed the contract for the match. Both men have lost matches before, so neither should have had a false sense of invincibility about him. Either one could have balked at the possibility of having his career ended with one loss. This especially applied to Flair, who already had lost numerous times to Hogan and had not looked good in any of their matches. When he put pen to paper, he knew what was at stake.

Flair lost. A simple count of three, and a 10-time world champion, perhaps the greatest competitor in

ON THE ROAD

With Chris Bernucca

the history of the sport, was no longer an active wrestler. The wrestling world was stunned.

But had Flair won, would the wrestling world have been any less stunned? Hogan has six world titles of his own and has won big in both major American federations. He is the only active wrestler with a resume comparable to that of Flair. Hogan has walked away from the sport many times before, but he has never officially retired. He always leaves the door open.

The stipulation of this match should have closed the door for the loser, at least for a predetermined amount of time. But now, barely six months after his retirement, Flair's full-time return to the ring seems imminent.

Flair may have let his ego get the best of him when he signed for the match against Hogan. He is a very proud and confident man who believed he could summon all of the skill and guile he needed to defeat Hogan and send him packing for good.

Previous experience told Flair he had no reason to believe he would not win the match. Ten months earlier, he had been faced with a similar situation against Big Van Vader. Win, and you take home the WCW World title belt.

Lose, and you trudge quietly into inactivity. Flair has always thrived under extreme pressure, and there was nothing more gut-wrenching than the premise of going out a loser.

Flair won that match, but we now have an insight into what would have happened had he lost. He'd be finding a way to finagle his way back into wrestling,

(Continued on page 76)



Had Ric Flair been able to scale the cage and drop to freedom, it would have been Hulk Hogan, not he, who would have been forced to retire.

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Funk vs. Sabu, Douglas vs. Funk 45 minute match, Funk vs. Pat Tanaka, Dreamer vs. Douglas, Bad Co. vs. Sullivan and Taz, Dreamer and Bad Co. vs. Taz and Sullivan and Hot Body PLUS Public Enemy, Sandman, Tazmaniac, Jason, 911, Sullivan, Bad Co., Hughes PLUS tons of other matches and interviews, PLUS tons of other matches with the ECW Stars.

ECW TV TAPE #2 • Features 6 hours of action
Snuka vs. Dreamer, Sabu vs. Shane (Brawl) Taz and Sullivan brawl with Bruise Brothers, Sabu vs. Pat Tanaka, Taz & Sullivan vs. Bruise Brothers (Title Change), Sabu vs. Tazmaniac, Douglas & Public Enemy vs. Funk & Crash & Sullivan Plus Pitbull, Cairo, Hawk, Snuka, Mike Awesome, Bad Breed, Sandman and more PLUS tons of other matches and interviews.

ECW TV TAPE #3 • Features 6 hours of action
Tanaka vs. Douglas, Taz vs. JT, Sandman vs. Cairo, Public Enemy vs. Bruise Brothers (Falls count anywhere WLD!!!) Sabu vs. Mike Awesome, Sandman vs. Dreamer, Sabu vs. Terry Funk, Bobby Eaton & Arn Anderson come in!!!! Taz & Sullivan vs. Snuka & Powers PLUS Paul E. Douglas, Pitbull, Hawk, 911, Peaches, Public Enemy, Bruise Brothers and more...

ECW TV TAPE #4 • Features 6 hours of action
Sandman vs. Cairo, Bruise Brothers vs. Public Enemy (Lumberjack match) Funk & Arn vs. Sabu & Eaton, Pitbull vs. Mikey, JT & Bruise Brothers & Dreamer vs. Douglas & Hughes & Public Enemy, Taz vs. Sandman PLUS Too Cold Scorpio, Cactus Jack, Sullivan, Jason and more...

ECW TV TAPE #5 • Features 6 hours of action
Sabu vs. Too Cold Scorpio, Cairo vs. Sandman (Falls count anywhere) Funk vs. Public Enemy, Pitbull vs. Jason, Cactus vs. Sabu Clips, Douglas & Hughes vs. Bruise Brothers (Cage match), 911 vs. Cairo, Dreamer vs. Douglas (Bloody), Taz vs. Jimmy Snuka, Public Enemy & Hack vs. Dreamer & Funks Plus Woman, Cactus Jack, Paul E. Peaches, Mikey, and more...

ECW TV TAPE #6 • Features 4 hours of action
911 & Mr. Hughes stare down, Sandman canes Dreamer, Snuka & Pitbulls vs. Funks & Dreamer, Barbed wire clips Funks vs. Public Enemy, Cactus Jack vs. Terry Funk clips, Jason vs. Mikey (Title change), Taz & Snuka vs. Pitbulls PLUS Chad Austin, Sabu, Paul E., Sandman, Dreamer, and more...

ECW TV TAPE #7 • Features 4 hours of action
Sabu vs. Dreamer, Scorpio vs. Sabu clips, 911 vs. Evil Clown, Sandman vs. Dreamer (Canning match • bloody), Douglas vs. Dean Malenko, Douglas vs. Scorpio from tournament, Chris Benoit vs. Scorpio clips, Cactus Jack & Mikey vs. Public Enemy (Title change) Douglas vs. Nishimura PLUS 911, Scorpio, Taz, Woman, Odessa, and tons of other matches including all the stars of ECW.

ECW TV TAPE #8 • Features 4 hours of action
Chris Benoit vs. Nishimura, Shane Douglas video, Sandman eye injury, Dreamer vs. Sandman (I quit match) bloody, Cactus Jack vs. Sabu WLD!!!, Jason vs. Mikey PLUS Public Enemy, Woman, Scorpio, Benoit, Paul E., Cactus, Taz, Malenko and all the stars of ECW.

ECW TV TAPE #9 • Features 4 hours of action
Chris Benoit vs. Tazmaniac, Public Enemy vs. Bad Breed (bat match blood bath), Dreamer vs. Cairo (wild brawl all over arena BLOODY), Sandman Press Conference, Douglas vs. Ron Simmons, Cactus Jack & Mikey vs. Public Enemy (bat match title change) Sabu vs. Chris Benoit, Sabu almost breaks his neck PLUS Scorpio, Woman, Sandman, Paul E., Dreamer, and all the stars of ECW.

ECW TV TAPE #10 • Features 4 hours of action
Brian Pillman & Douglas vs. Scorpio & Simmons, Dean Malenko vs. Scorpio (title change), Jason vs. Scorpio, Sabu & Taz vs. Malenko & Public Enemy interfere, Cactus Jack vs. Kevin Sullivan WLD!!!, Sandman vs. Dreamer (blood bath) PLUS Douglas, JT Smith, Sabu, Public Enemy, and all the stars of ECW.

SMW • Smoky Mountain Wrestling

SMW TV #1 JAN 1994 • 5 HOURS

Bob Armstrong vs. Dick Murdoch • Bodies vs. Fumas Brothers, DWB vs. Brian Lee, Smothers vs. Candito, Bodies attack Paul Morton, DWB vs. Killer Kyle, Candito vs. Spicolli PLUS The Moon Dogs, Jim Cornette, Terry Funk, Smothers, Tammy Fytch and all the stars of SMW.

SMW TV #2 FEB 1994 Features 4 Hours

Terry Funk vs. Bullet, DWB vs. Brian Lee (chain match), R & RX vs. Heavenly Bodies, Bodies & Killer Dyle vs. R & RX & Bobby Blaze Bloody, Press Conference with Thrill Seekers PLUS Moon Dogs, Doug Fumas, Candito, Tammy Fytch, Jim Cornette, Dutch Mantel, Bruise Brothers, Well Dunn and all the stars of SMW.

SMW TV #3 MARCH 1994 Features 4 Hours

DWS vs. Hornet, Tom Prichard vs. Tracey Smothers, R & RX vs. Well Dunn, Jim Cornette vs. Armstrong, R & RX vs. Bodies (looser leaves town), Smothers vs. Bedlam, Morton vs. Brian Lee, Well Dunn vs. Thrill Seekers PLUS Blaze, DWB, Thrill Seekers, Jake Roberts, Well Dunn, Tammy, Van Horn, and all the stars of SMW.

SMW TV #4 APRIL 1994 Features over 4 Hours

R & RX gets jumped by Lee & Candito, Lee & Candito vs. R & RX, Bruiser Bedlam & Jim Cornette vs. Armstrong, R & RX vs. Bodies (looser leaves town), Smothers vs. Bedlam, Morton vs. Brian Lee, Well Dunn vs. Thrill Seekers PLUS Blaze, DWB, Thrill Seekers, Jake Roberts, Well Dunn, Tammy, Van Horn, and all the stars of SMW.

SMW TV #5 MAY 1994 Features over 4 Hours

Bruiser Bedlam vs. Smothers (bloody), Lee & Candito, Lee & Candito vs. R & RX title change, Candito vs. Ricky Morton, Jake Roberts jumps DWB, Thrill Seekers vs. Well Dunn, Jake Roberts vs. DWB (title change), Sander Savage vs. Bedlam, Candito vs. Morton everyone comes in PLUS Armstrong, Tammy, Candito, R & RX & Bedlam, Dory Funk and all the stars of SMW.

SMW TV #6 JUNE 1994 Features...

Blaze & Fumas vs. Lee & Candito, Smothers vs. Ninja, Well Dunn vs. Seekers, R & RX surprise Tammy with Bambi, DWB vs. Ninja (Jake Roberts interferes), Jake & DWB brawl, Smothers gets attacked by DWB PLUS Armstrongs, Candito, Lee, Cornette, R & RX, Thrill Seekers and all the stars of SMW.

SMW TV #7 JULY 1994 Features...

Smothers vs. Killer Kyle, Jake, DDTs, Bambi and DWB saves her, R & RX and Bambi vs. Lee and Candito & Tammy, Funks vs. Armstrongs, Bodies jump Thrill Seekers in parking lot, Smothers vs. Brian Lee, Gangstas debut PLUS Terry Gordy, Thrill Seekers, Bodies, Cornette and all the stars of SMW.

SMW TV #8 AUGUST 1994 Features...

Lee & Candito vs. Armstrongs, Slater & Orton vs. Stomper & R. Garvin, Bodies vs. Thrill Seekers-Bloodiest match ever, R & RX vs. Lee & Candito (hair match), R & RX vs. Lee & Candito (title change) Lee turns on Candito, DWB vs. Killer Kyle, Candito vs. Lance Storm, R & RX vs. Bodies PLUS Gangstas, Bedlam, Chris Walker and all the other stars of SMW.

SMW TV #9 SEPT 1994 Features...

Gangstas vs. R & RX (R&RX get injured), R & RX vs. Gangstas re-match) Parking lot brawl with R & RX & Gangstas, Lance Storm vs. Boo Bradley, Brian Lee & Lance Storm vs. Candito & Boo Bradley, Gangstas hang Ricky Morton, Bedlam & Killer Kyle vs. Smothers & Armstrong PLUS tons of other matches with all the SMW stars.

SMW TV #10 OCT 1994 Features...

Boo Bradley vs. Lee, DWB & Bedlam Brawl, Ole Anderson and Bryant Anderson debut, Cactus Jack debut, Gangstas vs. R & RX, New Jack vs. Robert Bibson, Cactus Jack vs. Austin, Gangstas vs. R & RX barroom brawl, DWB vs. Bedlam (whipping match) Abby Video, Cactus & Boo Bradley Brawl, R & RX vs. Gangstas bloody brawl PLUS other matches with all the stars of SMW.

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SMW • Smoky Mountain Wrestling

SMW TV #11 NOV 1994 Features...

Bryant Anderson and Smothers confrontation, Gangstas vs. Brian Lee & Lance Storm wild brawl, Cornett and Armstrong argue, Cactus Jack feud clips, Cornette & Bedlam training video, Jim Cornette asks Gangstas to let him manage them, but they turn him down, PLUS Candito, Boo Bradley, Smothers, Anderson and all the other stars of SMW.

SMW TV #12 DEC 1994 Features...

Gangstas attack Armstrong, Anderson attacks Smothers, Cactus Jack vs. Candito, Gangstas vs. Armstrongs, Buddy Landel attacks DWB, Cactus Jack vs. Boo Bradley, Jim Cornette helps R & RX amazing!! DWB & Landel brawl, Lee vs. Landel title change, PLUS Jerry Lawler, Candito, Lee, Smothers, Anderson, Cactus, and all the other stars of SMW.

USWA

USWA TV #1—6 HOURS Features...

PG13 vs. Eliminators, Lawler & Christopher vs. Gilbert & Machine, Tommy Rich & Gilbert vs. Moon Dogs, Tommy Rich vs. Jerry Lawler & Gilbert & Rich vs. Lawler & Brian Christopher, Sid Vicious interferes GREAT!!! PLUS PG13, Koko B Ware, Master of Orient, Jef Gaylord, and all the stars of USWA.

USWA TV #2—6 HOURS Features...

Tommy Rich vs. Lawler (barbed wire blood bath), Christopher and Moon Dogs vs. Gilbert & Rich & Machine, Spellbinder vs. Christopher, Sid Vicious jumps Gaylord, Doug Gilbert vs. Brian Christopher plus PG 13, Eliminators, Sid Vicious, Huber Reggie B Fine.

USWA TV #3—6 HOURS Features...

Gilbert vs. Christopher (Car vs. title), Buddy Landel debut, Sid Vicious attacks Lawler, Landel turns on Christopher, Sid Vicious vs. Tanaka, Moon Dogs vs. Rich & Landel (blood bath), Lawler vs. Spellbinder, Moon Dogs get jumped by Rich & Landel, Lawler & Idol vs. Sid Vicious & Huber PLUS all the other stars of USWA.

USWA TV #4—6 HOURS Features...

Rich & Landel attach Moon Dogs, Landel & Rich vs. PG13 parking lot brawl, Lawler vs. Sid Vicious, Landel vs. Christopher, Sid & Gilbert vs. Eliminators, Lawler & Christopher vs. Spellbinder & Fine, Christopher vs. Gilbert (Hair vs. Hair), Dark Patriot vs. Christopher, all the other stars of USWA.

USWA TV #5—6 HOURS Features...

Sid Vicious & Gilbert vs. Lawler & Christopher, PG 13 & Miss Texas vs. Phantoms & Fantasia, Lawler vs. Gilbert, Rich vs. Lawler, bloody locker room brawl, Mable vs. Sid Vicious, Landel vs. Rich, Moon Dogs vs. Cadillac Brother PLUS Spellbinder, Landel, PG13, and all the other stars of USWA.

USWA TV #6—6 HOURS Features...

Rich & Landel feud clips, Lawler & Christopher vs. Rich & Gilbert PLUS a bloody locker room brawl, Moon Dogs vs. Rich & Gilbert & Dowden vs. Lawler & Dundee & Christopher, Rich vs. Landel, Gaylord vs. Spellbinder, Bruise Brothers debut, Lawler & Dundee & Christopher vs. Rich & Gilbert & Machine, PLUS tons of other matches with all the USWA stars.

USWA TV #7—6 HOURS Features...

Lawler & Rich brawl, Rich vs. Christopher, Dundee & Gilbert brawl, Rich & Christopher brawl, PG 13 & Dundee vs. Spellbinder & Gilbert & Rich, best of Memphis 10 man tag match PLUS tons of year in review matches with Funk, Sid Vicious, Lawler, Dundee, Rich, Landel and all of the other stars of USWA.

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Behind the Dressing Room Door

by David Rosenbaum

HAVE TO be honest: I never wondered what it would be like to wrestle in the back of an 18-wheel truck going 55 miles per hour on the outskirts of Tupelo, Mississippi, and I never had the desire to watch such a wrestling match. Not surprisingly, after watching Dustin Rhodes wrestle Blacktop Bully in the back of a truck, I had no desire to see Truck Match II.

This was dangerous stuff, perhaps the most dangerous wrestling match ever held. Scaffold matches are dangerous, but at least if you fall off the scaffold, you land on the semi-padded wrestling ring. Fall out of a truck going 55 and you're roadkill.

There was absolutely no room for error as Blacktop Bully hung precariously on the outside of the specially designed cage. One false move or slip and he would've gone splat on the pavement, and there's nothing that would have prevented his near-immediate death. Since WCW Uncensored was aired live, the gory, bloody death scene would have been viewed by millions of people including, I'm sure, many children.

WCW can say all it wants about refusing to sanction the card and distancing itself from the proceedings, but the card was called WCW Uncensored—not just Uncensored—and it was produced by Turner Home Entertainment. This was a WCW card, organized and approved of by WCW officials.

If Bully went splat with every-

one watching, it would have been WCW's problem.

The thought went through Dustin Rhodes' mind.

"I didn't want to kill Bully, I wanted to beat him," said Dustin, who did neither. "I guess I didn't realize the implications involved. I didn't really think there'd be a way for us to get outside the truck, and I forgot how tough it is to retain

your balance at 55 miles per hour, much less wrestle. I'm not sure if I'd do it again. There was a time there when I could've pushed Bully over the top and onto the pavement, but I decided not to. Killing him wouldn't have been worth it."

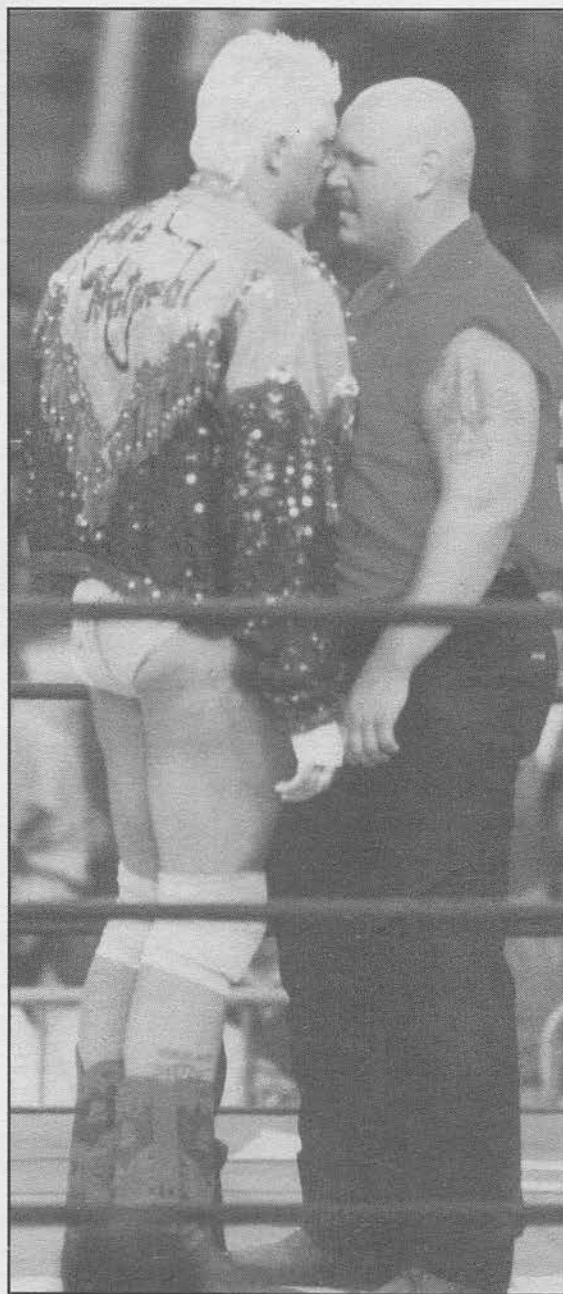
It won't make Dustin feel any better than Bully would have seized the opportunity if it was presented to him.

"I would've loved to watch Rhodes go splat," Blacktop Bully said. "That wouldn't have killed him, but he would've looked a heckuva lot like roadkill!"

For those who missed the "King Of The Road" match, the ring was the entire flatbed of an 18-wheel truck. The bed was enclosed by bars, padded with hay, and decorated with assorted farm equipment, including pails, shovels, and troughs filled with cow manure.

Maybe Rhodes and Bully thought they were

(Continued on page 78)



Seeing Dustin Rhodes and Blacktop Bully going nose-to-nose is one thing, but seeing them wrestle inside the flatbed of a moving 18-wheeler didn't impress Dave Rosenbaum.

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SEPTEMBER 1994 WRESTLER 88 pages of excitement—including the lively and candid "WWF Midyear Report," a review of the WWF through the first half of the year! Includes four color pinups!

WINTER 1994 WRESTLER includes the must-read bonus section, "Wrestling From A To Z"—an alphabetical array of wrestling trends and turmoil! Four full-color pinups complete this sensational 88-page package!

MARCH 1990 INSIDE WRESTLING looks back at the decade of the '80s with a dazzling eight-page full-color section and a year-by-year review of the most significant events in the sport. Must reading for all fans!

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the Insider

by Eddie Ellner

Editor's note: INSIDE WRESTLING columnists Eddie Ellner and Liz Hunter have been given the assignment of traveling cross-country by car and recording their observations of the sport and the people who follow it. This is the second in their series of articles.

FIRST OF ALL, to hell with Liz Hunter and her pigeon-brained pigeonholing. I suggest you read her column on page 16 before you get any deeper into this one. Obviously, she's very comfortable in her portrait of me as a seaweed-eating, Muzak-humming New Age psychotic. Hey, I love loud music, but no sane person can listen to the same Duran Duran bootleg tape more than once.

"They're so cute," she said, her defense for things normal people find odious and repulsive. "They look just like Morton and Gibson."

"No, no, no," I screamed. "Morton and Gibson are not rock stars. They're pudgy old men with dyed hair and arthritic ring moves.

At least Duran Duran had the sense and decency to cut their hair."

And so we drove to Virginia to see The Crock 'n' Troll Express. Rick Morton and Robert Gibson



This is about all The Crock 'n' Troll Express is good for these days: making cute little hand gestures. I can't believe I drove hour after hour to see these two idiots.

did resemble rock stars—David Crosby and Jerry Garcia are two that immediately come to mind—and they didn't move nearly as well as Mick Jagger.

As for the burritos, I needed the bean enzymes to counteract the radical damage Hunter's second-

hand smoke was causing my heart and lungs. Too bad the surgeon general hadn't put the warning "Smoking makes you allergic to shopping malls" on cigarette cartons. The threat of not being able to pick up another pair of ugly heels would compel Hunter to drop her bad habit like a bad habit.

But all that is irrelevant. When my spies at ESPN informed me of Michael Jordan's comeback, I knew what I had to do. Would Publisher Stu Saks mind the \$11,000 bill for helicopter and limousine rental? Who cares? I put

the world's most famous (impatiently) retired wrestler in the same arena on the day the most famous retired athlete played his first home game. You're gonna tell me a priceless moment like that ain't worth 11 grand?

This trip was taking its toll on everything—spirit, finances, energy level. I decided to do the women of America a favor and let 'em in on the little things that men can't stand. Okay, that and the fact *Mademoiselle* pays pretty well. My advice to Ms. Hunter is to read the story. Then maybe she could keep a man longer than the time it takes her to fall

asleep and him to sneak down the fire escape.

After the Bulls game, Flair, Liz, and I enjoyed a Japanese feast. "This is the best umeboshi-kuzu sauce I ever tasted," Flair crowed, as relaxed as I've ever seen him.

(Continued on page 80)

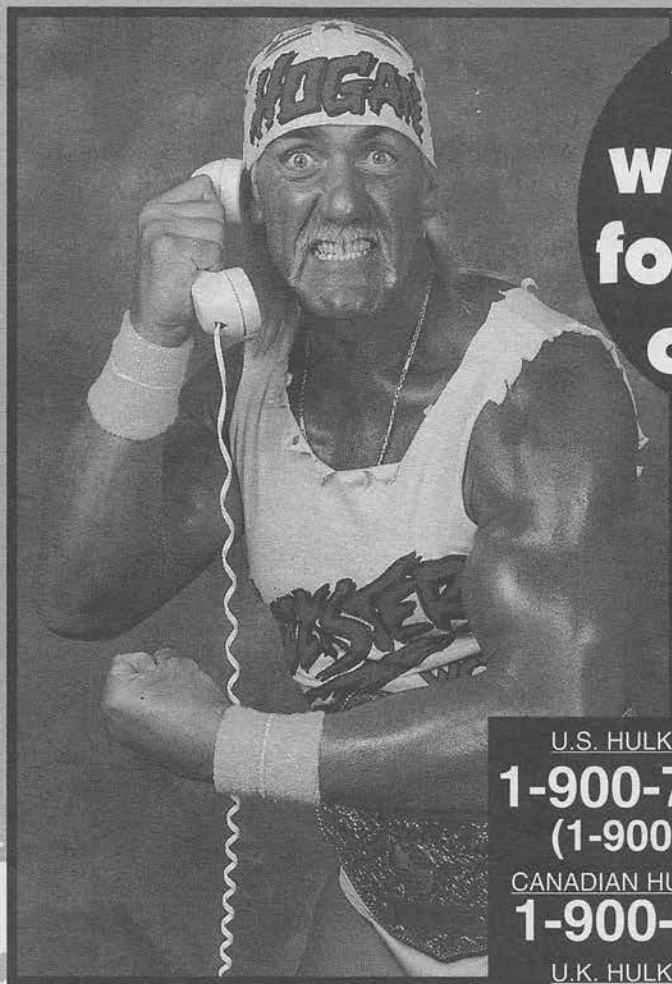
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ON Assignment

By Liz Hunter

IT WAS TURNING into another typical day with Ellner on the road. No smoking, no talking, no fast food, and no loud music allowed.

"We just passed a cemetery," I said. "Maybe you should check in early."

Originally, our cross-country gallop was scheduled to last four weeks. But after reaching Michigan, Ellner decided to double back and head down the eastern seaboard to a high school in Virginia to watch The Rock 'n' Roll Express wrestle Al Snow and Unibomb.

"We're going to drive 15 hours to watch the Express defend the Smoky Mountain tag team belts against *Al Snow and Unibomb*?" I asked.

"I had a dream last night that Morton and Gibson spontaneously combusted in the ring," was his reply. "If it happens and I'm not there, I'll never forgive myself."

It was becoming clear to me that Ellner was the one in danger of spontaneously combusting. At a convenience store outside Baltimore, he ate three burritos—a bewildering violation of his macrobiotic diet. While he waited for the microwave to heat up, I flipped through the March issue of *Mademoiselle* and almost lost my cookies. On page 178 appeared the story, "6 Things Men Hate." The author was one Eddie Ellner.

"What's this about?" I asked, shoving the magazine in his face.

His eyes bulged. "This is what it is. It's nothing," he said. "We have to go now."

In Virginia, Morton and Gibson didn't erupt into flames as prophesied, and their victory hurled

Ellner into a deep depression.

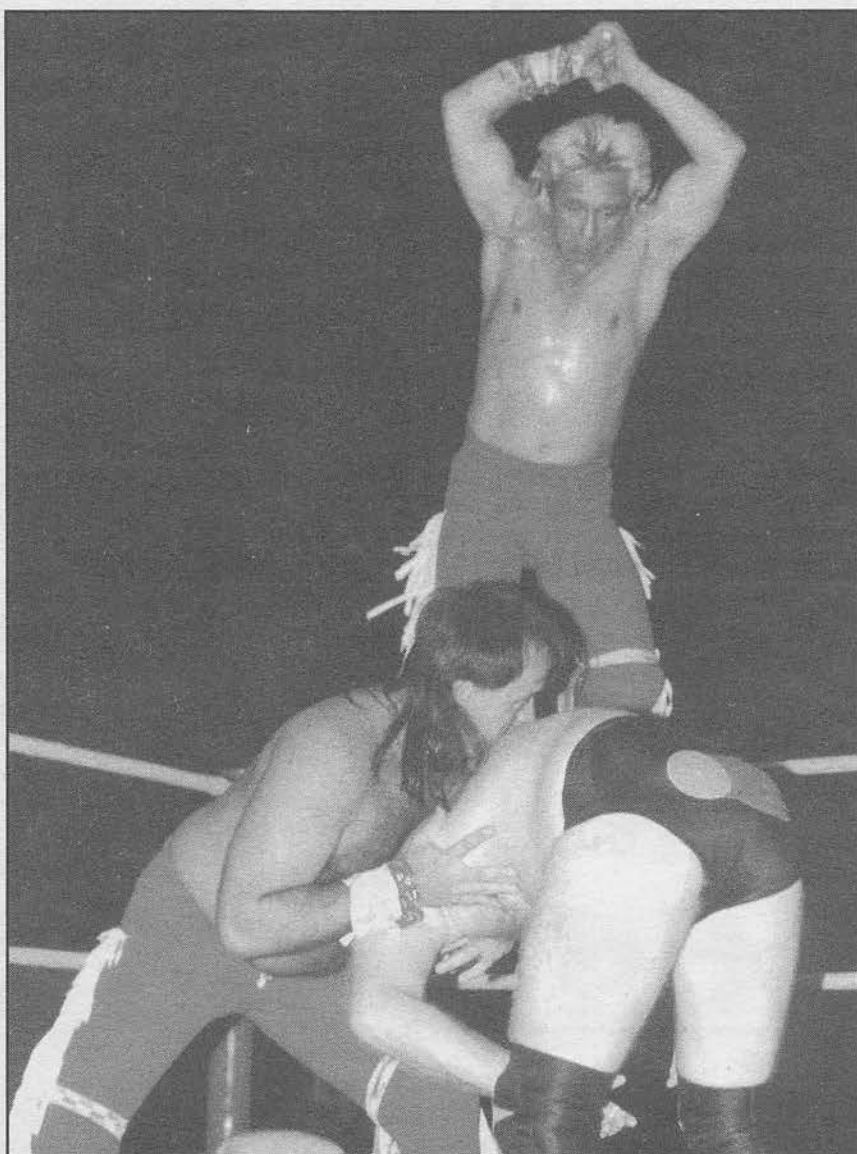
"We have to see more wrestling," he said.

"There's a women's group meeting at the motel later," I volunteered. "Maybe you want to catch that ... for research purposes."

But he had left what little sense of humor he possessed back in

New York. At dinner that night, he chased two double-cheeseburgers with three beers. Something was very wrong. When I heard him showering at two in the morning, I almost called Emergency Medical Services.

"Where are you going?" I
(Continued on page 82)



The Rock 'n' Roll Express racked up another victory when Liz saw them in Virginia. Much to the chagrin of Eddie Ellner, the Rock 'n' Rolls are still excelling in Smoky Mountain.

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INSIDE WRESTLING CAPSULE PROFILE 229

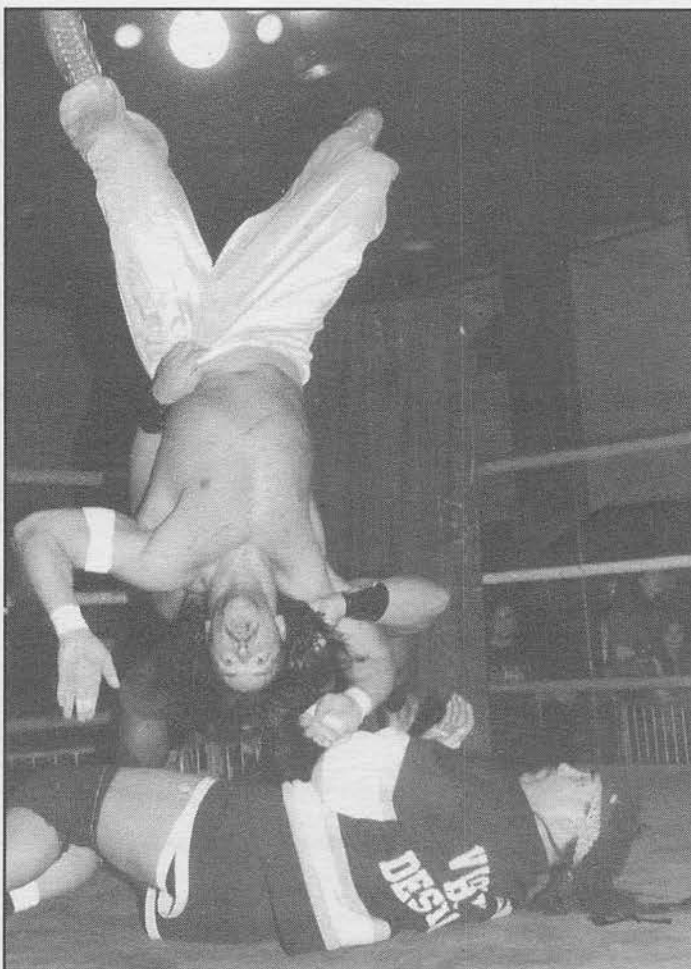
SABU

YOU COULD LOOK all over the world and you'd have a difficult time finding a wrestler more reckless than 6', 215-pound Sabu ... The daring aerialist, a native of Bombay, India, is the most talked-about star on the independent circuit today, and he only figures to get better ...

Started preparing seriously for a wrestling career after being shot with a gun in the teeth at a high school party ... Spent years training under The Sheik before he made his pro debut in 1985 (*"He is a sadistic genius"*) ... Destroyed The Canadian Road Warrior in his pro debut in Detroit and began to dominate the independent circuit ... Teamed frequently with Sheik in Japan's Frontier Martial Arts Federation in the early-1990s, where they feuded with the likes of Tarzan Goto, Mr. Gannosuke, and Asako Sambo (*"We didn't just beat people; we tore them apart!"*) ... After wrestling in the Midwest for years, Sabu signed with Philadelphia-based ECW in 1993 and began feud-

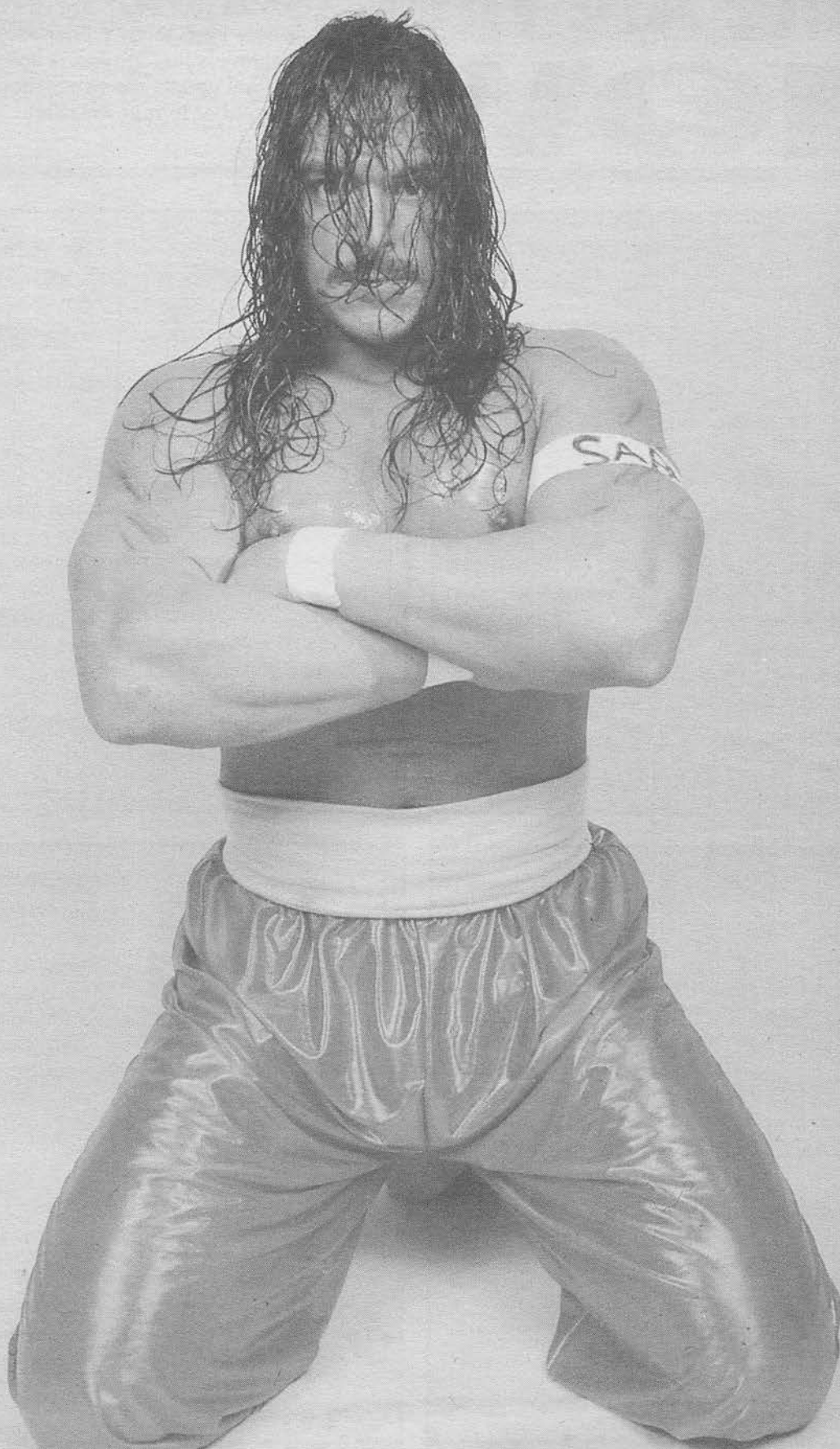
ing with Tasmaniac (*"He is a true maniac, like me!"*) ... Shocked and amazed fans by repeatedly moon-saulting onto press tables until they smashed (*"Something for everyone to remember me by"*) ... Beat Chris Candido in several thrilling matches around the country in 1993 ... Took on Paul E. Dangerously as his manager for ECW bouts (*"A hardcore manager"*) ... Won the biggest match of his career when he pinned Shane Douglas for the ECW heavyweight

title on October 2, 1993 ... Added a second title to his resume when he beat Terry Funk for the TV belt six weeks later (*"Titles are not important; hurting people is"*) ... The Funk-Sabu rivalry has been one of the most exciting in wrestling during the last two years ... Lost the heavyweight title to Funk in December of 1993 after Douglas smashed him in the back of the head (*"The old man was lucky to have help"*) ... Lost the TV title to Tasmaniac in March of 1994 ...



Wrestling fans love to watch Sabu, mainly because he is so daring. In one recent match, he allowed his tag team partner, Tasmaniac, to suplex him onto Rocco Rock.

Three months later, began a wild, violent, bloody feud with Cactus Jack (*"I hate him, but I respect him"*) ... His career nearly ended when he suffered a cracked vertebra in a match against "Crippler" Chris Benoit (*"He will pay for that with his blood one day"*) ... Returned to action only two weeks later ... Began teaming with Tasmaniac, and the two won the ECW tag team belts from Public Enemy in one of the wildest matches in recent memory (*"Violence is my life"*) ... They lost the belts to Benoit and Dean Malenko two weeks later, however ... If he can somehow avoid serious injury, Sabu should be a superstar for a long time to come, no matter where he chooses to compete.



SABU

Where Are They NOW

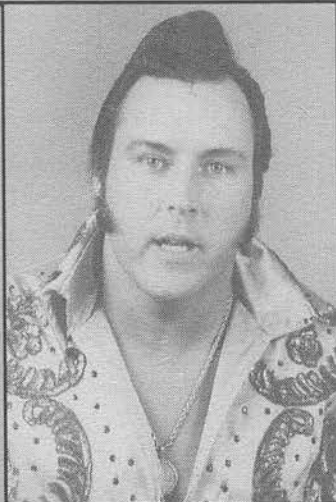
Do you have a favorite wrestler who has left your area? Are you wondering where he is today? Then this special column is just for you. Each month we will update the whereabouts of four current or former wrestlers



MISSY HYATT

The former "First Lady Of WCW" has a pending lawsuit against the federation in which she alleges sexual harassment and discrimination. She is currently working as a bartender at a club in New York City, where she now lives, and hopes to soon make it as an actress. "I like meet-

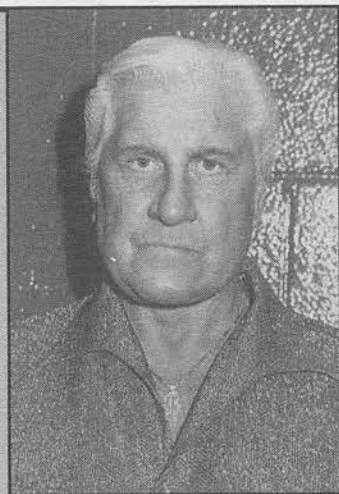
ing people," she said. "There are of people who come into the club recognize me, and I like talkin' to them." She has no plans to return to wrestling in the near future.



THE HONKY TONK MAN

The obnoxious Elvis wannabe abruptly left WCW in December of 1994, but he is still wrestling occasionally on the independent circuit. "All the wrestlers in WCW were afraid of me," he claimed. "I couldn't get a fair match!" When he isn't wrestling, HTM,

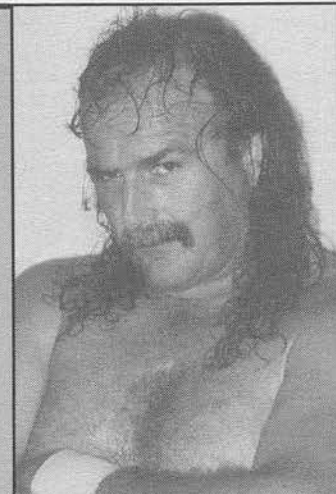
can usually be found at his home working on an album that he says will be the hottest-selling record in country music history. "All the record companies want me to record it on their label," he said.



FRED BLASSIE

"Classy" Freddie was inducted into the WWF Hall of Fame last June for his excellence as a manager and wrestler, and he is still involved in wrestling. Blassie, who makes his home in upstate New York, works for the WWF as a goodwill ambassador. He ap-

pears on radio shows from time to time and also speaks at various civic and charity functions. "I love what I do," he reported. "And I still recognize a pencil-necked geek when I see one!"



JAKE ROBERTS

After a fine 20-year career, "The Snake" retired in February. Roberts converted to Christianity two years ago and intends to tour the nation this summer and speak in prisons, churches, and at Fellowship of Christian Athletes conventions about the importance of

religion. He acknowledges he has had drug problems in the past and says he wants to speak to kids about the mistakes he made. "I just wasn't happy out there on the road anymore," he admitted.

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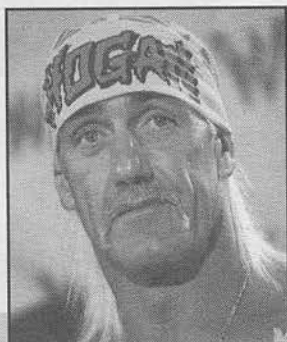
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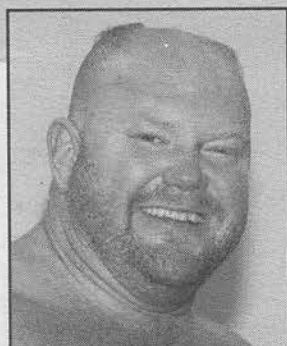
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NEWS FROM THE

DETROIT, MI BY FRAN RACINE



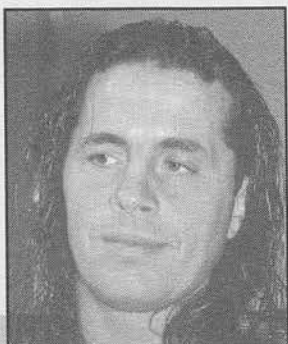
HULK HOGAN VS. BIG VAN VADER



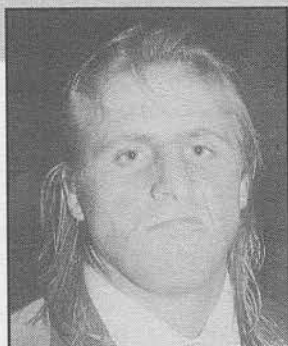
This was the match fans at Cobo Arena were waiting for. After the two combatants exchanged a few powerful punches, most of the rest of the match took place outside the ring. Hogan actually threw Vader over the guard rail and into the crowd, then pulled him back toward the ring and blasted him with a chair. After Vader recovered, he surprised Hogan with a well-executed vertical suplex. A few minutes later, Hulk went back on the offense and nailed Vader with a boot to the face. He followed that by hitting him with Jimmy Hart's megaphone outside the ring. A stunned Vader was counted out.

OTHER BOUTS: WCW TV champ Arn Anderson pinned Johnny B. Badd ... Marcus Bagwell & The Patriot beat Steve Austin & Lord Steven Regal ... Alex Wright beat Paul Roma ... WCW World tag team champs Harlem Heat beat The Nasty Boys ... Randy Savage & Sting defeated Avalanche & Big Bubba Rogers.

CINCINNATI, OH BY RYAN MISHLER



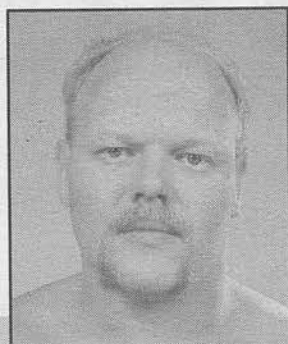
BRET HART VS. OWEN HART



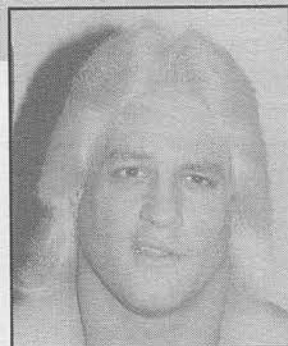
Owen has been unable to beat his brother since they clashed at WrestleMania X, and he showed his frustration in this no-holds-barred bout. He jumped Bret before the bell. "The Hitman" was ready and used a backbreaker on him, then threw him out of the ring. Next he slammed Owen's head into some steel steps. Surprisingly, Owen fought back by choking Bret with the house microphone, though Bret refused to give up. Owen pulled Bret back into the ring and removed one of the corner turnbuckles, but Bret repeatedly rammed his head into it, then hooked on the "sharpshooter" and got the victory by submission.

OTHER BOUTS: Bob Holly & The Kid beat The Heavenly Bodies ... The Headshrinkers and Eli & Jacob Blu wrestled to a double-disqualification ... Shawn Michaels pinned Lex Luger ... WWF World champion Diesel pinned Intercontinental champion Jeff Jarrett.

ERLANGER, KY BY MILLICENT GILLINGHAM



TONY ANTHONY VS. BUDDY LANDELL

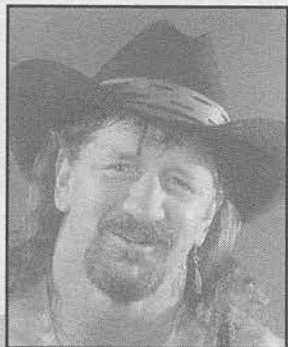


Landell claims to be the only true "Nature Boy" in wrestling, but not many people who watched this match would support that claim. He stalled a lot in the no-time-limit, no-disqualification match against the "Dirty White Boy." Landell did a pretty good job trading punches with Anthony in the first few minutes of the bout, but quickly wore down. Luckily for him, Al Snow charged to the ring and handed him a pair of brass knuckles. Landell earned a cheap pinfall victory after blasting Anthony with the knuckles. After the match, he smothered Anthony with a plastic bag until The Rock 'n' Roll Express chased him away.

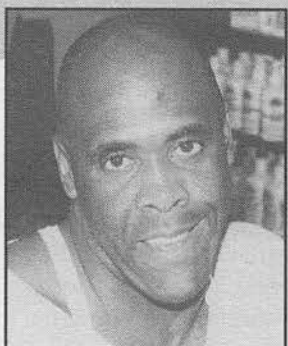
OTHER BOUTS: Tracey Smothers beat D-Lo Brown ... Boo Bradley pinned Chris Candido in a "loser-must-eat-dog-food" match ... SMW tag team champs The Rock 'n' Roll Express beat Al Snow & Unibomb ... Dan Severn pinned NWA champ Chris Candido to win the title ... The Gangstas beat The Heavenly Bodies.

WRESTLING CAPITALS

LAS VEGAS, NV
BY RICH MANZILLO



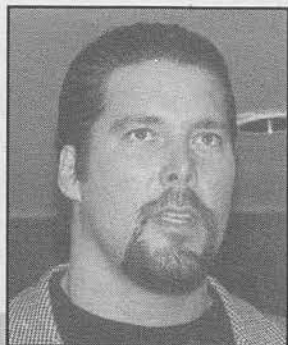
**TERRY FUNK
VS.
VIRGIL**



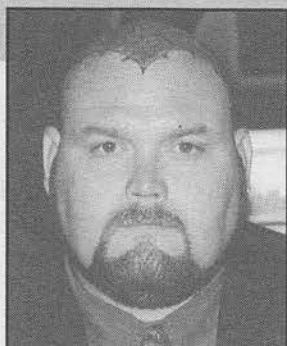
Virgil knew he was taking a big chance when he agreed to face Funk in a branding-iron match. This is one of Terry's specialties, and he again showed why on this National Wrestling Conference card. After taunting the crowd, Funk went right after Virgil. Tables, chairs, garbage cans, and bottles were used as weapons in this 30-minute bout. When the wrestlers finally reentered the ring after brawling all over the arena, Funk was covered with blood, ketchup, mustard, and hot dog buns. Using the branding iron, he somehow managed to pin Virgil. Junkyard Dog rescued him, however, before Funk could burn him with the iron.

OTHER BOUTS: Navajo Kid pinned Louie Spicolli ... Larry Powers beat KGB ... Judge Dredd beat Samurai Warrior ... SWAT beat Wild Renegade & Gary Key in a handicap match ... The Islanders beat The Mercenaries ... Junkyard Dog beat The Thug ... Virgil won a 15-man battle royal.

CHICAGO, IL
BY FRANK ROWLAND



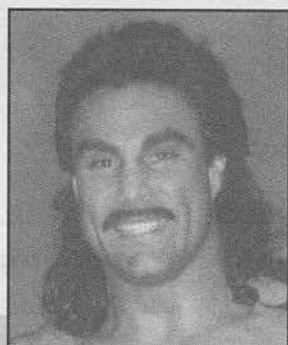
**DIESEL
VS.
BAM BAM
BIGELOW**



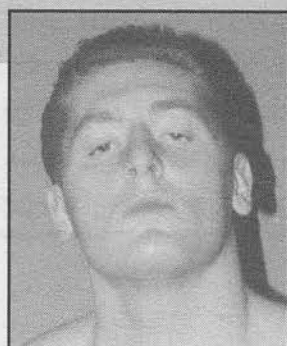
Chants of "L.T.!" reverberated throughout the United Center during this bout, and they obviously got to Bigelow, who left the ring to yell at fans. A few minutes into the bout, "Big Daddy Cool" took command by flooring Bam Bam with a series of clotheslines that knocked him to the arena floor. But when Diesel followed him out, Bigelow rammed him into the ringpost, then rolled him back inside. Diesel eventually recovered, dropped Bigelow with a bulldog, then pinned him to retain his WWF World title after a "jackknife" power bomb.

OTHER BOUTS: Kama beat Bob "Spark Plugg" Holly ... "Man O' War" Aldo Montoya pinned Kwang ... Eli & Jacob Blu defeated The Headshrinkers ... Davey Boy Smith pinned Tatanka ... Razor Ramon defeated Intercontinental champ Jeff Jarrett by disqualification ... Shawn Michaels pinned Lex Luger ... Bret Hart defeated Owen Hart by submission.

COLUMBIA, SC
BY MARY HAWKINS

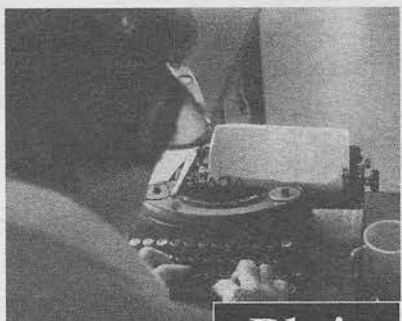


**JOHNNY B. BADD
VS.
LORD STEVEN
REGAL**



His Lordship has not forgotten that it was Badd who ended his second WCW title reign last fall, and he is still seeking revenge. The crowd at the Township Auditorium booed Regal as he gestured toward them. Sadly for Lord Steven, things didn't get much better. Every time he had things going his way, Badd smashed him with a powerful left hand, and he retreated to the arena floor to catch his breath. After about 10 minutes, Regal began to tire from taking so much punishment. He attempted a rollup when Badd was near the ropes, but Johnny B. reversed it for the pinfall.

OTHER BOUTS: Marcus Bagwell & The Patriot beat Paul Orndorff & Paul Roma ... Alex Wright pinned Bobby Eaton ... The Nasty Boys defeated WCW World tag team champions Harlem Heat by disqualification ... Sting beat Avalanche by disqualification ... WCW U.S. champion Big Van Vader pinned Hacksaw Duggan.



Matt Brock's **Plain Speaking**

Harder than nails, veteran wrestling reporter Matt Brock has logged more miles covering wrestling than any other journalist. Every month Matt will travel to the sport's hotbeds, reporting everything he sees without fear or favor

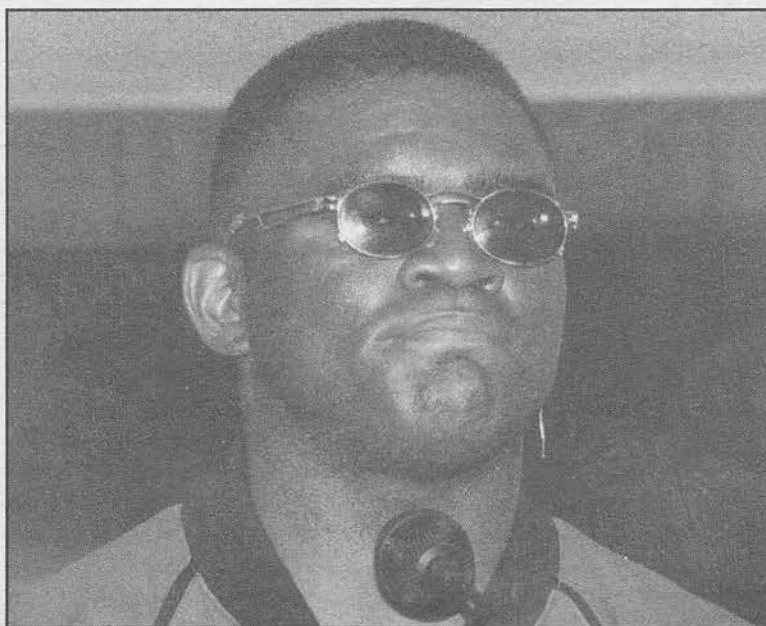
In town for an independent card and had some time to kill, so I decided to take a long walk. Turned the corner and saw a crowd of people—looked like a few thousand or so—and what seemed like a camp of TV cameras and photographers. Journalistic instinct took over. *Something's going on here*, I figured. So I walked up to some old-timer who had a pencil sticking out of his ear and asked him, "Hey, Mack, what's going on here? Did I miss something?" "Yeah," he snapped in response. "You've missed the last nine months if you don't know what's going on here." Then he turned red as a beet and added, "Hey, aren't you Matt Brock, the famous wrestling writer? Buddy, you're missing the battle royal of the century. You oughta just grab a hotel room around here—if you can get one—and just watch. You don't even have to go inside." It didn't take me long to put two and two together, especially after I looked up at the building and saw the

LOS ANGELES, CA

words "Los Angeles County Courthouse." Ain't that my luck? I go for a walk and end up running into the trial of the century. Meanwhile, Mack, who says he met me two years ago at WrestleMania IX in Vegas, is trying to make small talk about wrestling, and I'm looking for the nearest escape exit. Some guy selling "Free O.J." buttons bumps into me, and I instinctively check for my wallet. Another bum sticks a "Turn Up The Juice" T-shirt in my face, and it's all I can do to grab it from his slimy hands and wrap it around his throat. Then I realize wrestling doesn't need a trial of the century. It already had one last summer, when Vince McMahon and the whole WWF was on trial. Wonder what would happen if Hulk Hogan killed his wife? It couldn't be anything like this. Oh, about the card: I didn't go. Mack and I snuck into a local bar and watched *Geraldo Live* on CNBC. This trip's on me, Saks.

When you've been on this beat long enough, you start to recognize double-talk for what it is: double-talk. Lawrence Taylor, the former football great, got fired from his job on TNT's NFL broadcasts no more than a few weeks after he signed for a half-million (or \$150,000, depending on who you believe) to wrestle Bam Bam Bigelow at WrestleMania XI. Then some TNT front man issues a ridiculous statement that Taylor's firing had nothing to do with his joining the WWF. "The timing was totally coincidental," he said. Right, and that

ATLANTA, GA



LAWRENCE TAYLOR

black glove just happened to find its way into O.J. Simpson's yard, and the blood on the glove just happened to be his ex-wife's. Stretching the truth is one thing, but taking the general public and the media for a bunch of idiots is yet another. Networks don't just fire famous commentators two months after the season and replace them with nobody. If you're paying attention, don't count on Ken Norton Jr., Reggie White, Chris Spielman, Steve McMichael, Ricky Jackson, or Carl Banks to ever replace Taylor on TNT. Those football players were also slated to be at WrestleMania XI. Heck, here's an idea: The WWF ought to employ every great former football player so that TNT can't use them on its broadcasts. I don't know about you, but the first time I made the Taylor-TNT-WWF connection was when TNT fired Taylor.

"Get yourself an answering machine, Matthew," Sheila Warner keeps telling me when she's in one of those moods that makes me think she's my mother and not my lady. "You shouldn't have to answer the telephone when you're busy doing other things. Besides, who knows who's on the other end?" Three days later, she showed up at my door with a package from one of those electronic stores, and you can guess what was inside. Unfortunately, she was too late. A few minutes earlier, my not-lost-long-enough niece Brandi Mankiewicz called asking for my input on a story on women in wrestling. "We're doing a special section for an upcoming issue of *PWI*, Uncle Matt. We know how much you respect women in wrestling," she said. What she really knows is how to get under my skin. She wanted

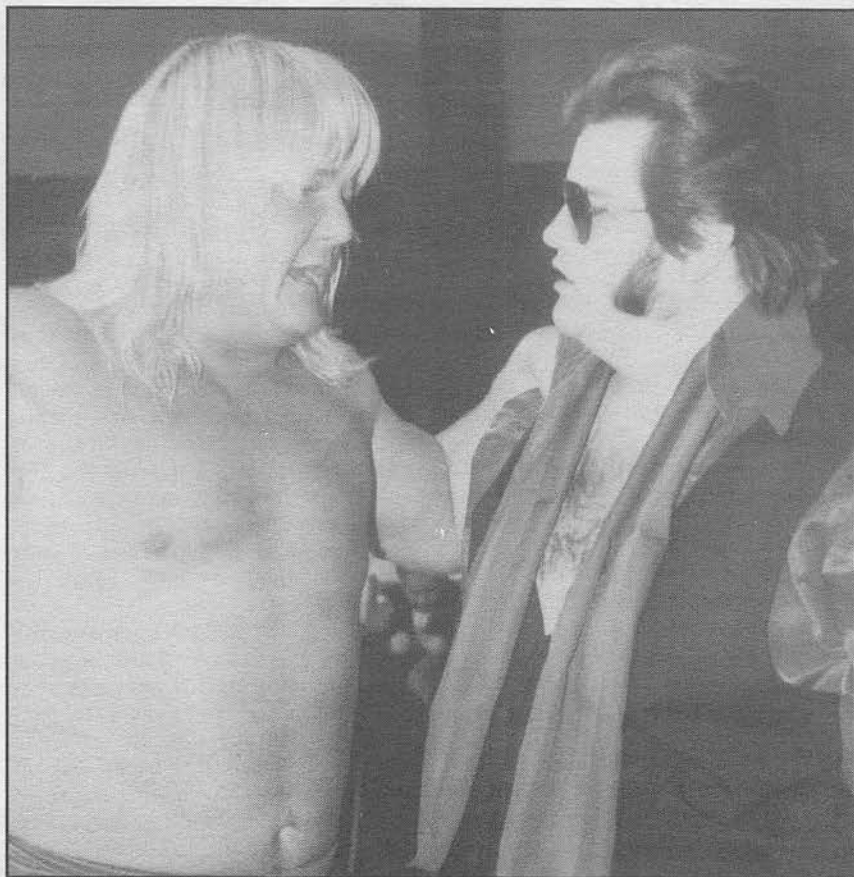
600 words "by tomorrow," and I told her, "I work on a freelance basis. If I don't want to do a story, I don't do it, and I don't want to do this story. Come back when you do something on the Japanese influence on pro wrestling." She hung up. "Hey, Sheila," I said. "What do you think about the influence of women in wrestling?" "I don't know," she replied. "But I do know something about the influence of women on wrestling writers." I plugged in the answering machine and let it work its magic.

Greg Valentine's a champion again. He beat Tito Santana for the International Championship Wrestling heavyweight title, and I'd be willing to bet Valentine was the most surprised man in the building. Here's a tag team expert in the autumn of his career, and beating Santana one-on-one has never been easy.

Well, he actually won the match by DQ, but his new manager, The King, weasled a stipulation in the match contract that said the belt could change hands on a DQ. It just goes to show you what's possible in a federation that includes Rick Martel, Scott and Ivan Putski, Bastion Booger, Koko B. Ware, Tony Atlas, Jimmy Snuka, and Joe Savoldi. Sounds like a WWF undercard, but these days, that's what you get on the independent scene. Hate to complain, but I liked the days when the independent federations were a spawning ground for up-and-coming young stars. These days, the up-and-comer in ICW is Scott Putski, Ivan's son, and he's not young, and the jury's out on whether he's an up-and-comer. We'll see. I'll change my mind if he can beat Valentine. Maybe. □

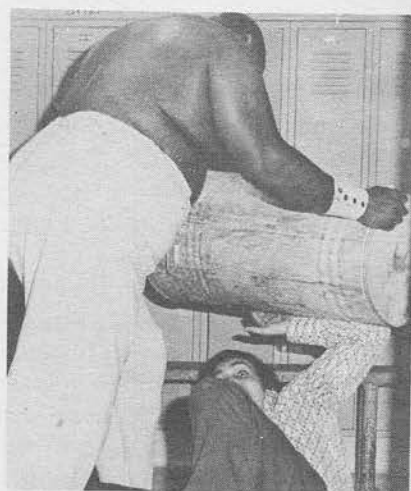
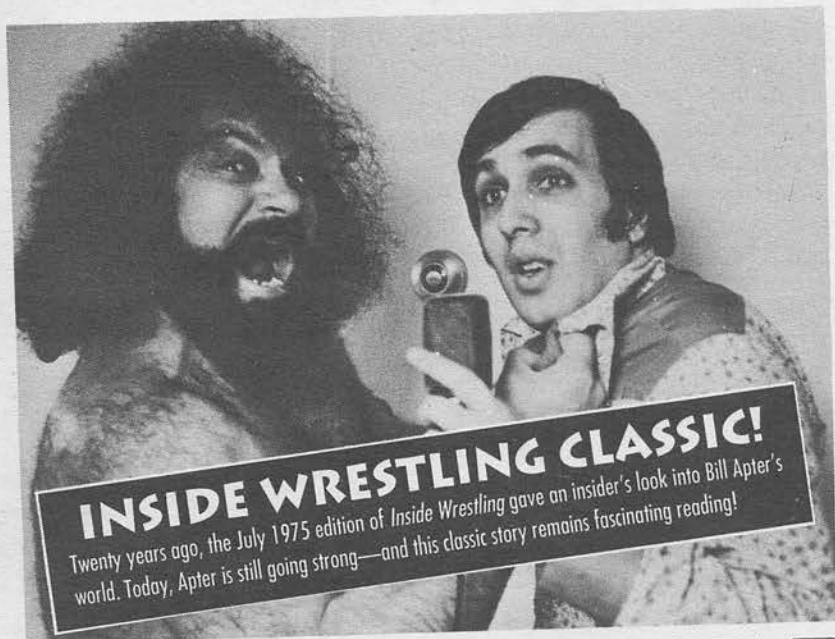
ORWIGSBURG, PA

NEW YORK, NY



GREG VALENTINE & THE KING

Bill Apter has been a wrestling fan for many years and a wrestling reporter/photographer for the last five. Many people think he has a dream job. Sometimes it is. But other times it's downright dangerous!



Tangles with Pampero Firpo (left) and Abdullah The Butcher (above) have made Apter's job hazardous.

CONFIDENTIAL WRESTLING

“HEY BILL,” I’m invariably asked, “What’s Pampero Firpo really like?” “What’s John Tolos really like?” or, what are a dozen other wrestlers I’ve come in contact really like.

Well, I’ve decided to tell you what some of the wrestlers are *really* like outside the arena. Who am I going to tell you about? The wrestlers I’m asked about most often.

First comes Pampero Firpo, or “De Great Pampero” as he prefers to be called. He is, as he tells it, “a very intelligent man.” He speaks seven languages fluently. But enough about his education.

Pampero is just like you see him, a wildman. He keeps his hotel room, in whatever city he’s appearing, like a pig sty. His hair is wildly scatter-

ed around his head and his eyes give off a wild, maniacal, look.

Firpo doesn’t like to have his time wasted. An interview with him has to be to the point. If you beat around the bush, he’ll throw you out—literally. I know. I’ve been thrown out of Pampero’s home, hotel rooms, and dressing rooms more than once.

“Leesten, Meester,” he growls. “I don’t like to be bothered. Get to your questions and get out!” That’s his attitude.

Recently, however, Pampero has undergone a change. Fans in some areas are cheering for him now that he’s teaming with guys like Tony Marino. His attitude towards reporters has also changed as I found out on a recent visit to his dressing room.

“Oh, come in Meester Apter,” he said, extending his hand. I couldn’t

believe it. He poured me a cup of coffee and told me, “make yourself at home.” Then I interviewed him and it was a delight. He didn’t even make a move to lay a hand on me.

Knowing Firpo, this attitude won’t last long. He is, in plain English, maniacal and can’t be trusted. For Tony Marino’s sake, I hope I’m wrong.

John Tolos, The Golden Greek. No doubt about it, he is in love, with himself! Tolos’ favorite subject is himself.

“Let’s talk about your feud with Victor Rivera,” I asked him.

“Let’s not,” Tolos suggested. “Let’s look at my marvelous career. Let’s just talk about me.”

Tolos is not a soft spoken man. He loves to yell at the top of his lungs to make sure you get the point. His sore spot? Mention the name

Abdullah Farouk makes sure Bill gets his point as he nearly rips open Bill's suit jacket.

Fred Blassie, as I did.

"Blassie!" Tolos exclaimed. Then he grabbed my shirt collar and pulled, almost tearing it. "Don't mention that two-faced bum when I'm around!"

Tolos likes to be the center of attraction. However, he doesn't have to beg for attention because he's got a built-in charisma that seems to draw people to him like a magnet draws steel nails.

"When I am around," Tolos brags, "even in a room with a thousand people, I'm the only one you'll notice. I'm irresistible!"

Disagree with Tolos and he'll go out of his way to prove you wrong.

There is no way to communicate with Abdullah The Butcher unless his manager is around. He's had so many, it's hard to keep track of who's handling him."

"The guy's completely bananas," The Black Baron, a former manager said. And man, he's not kidding.



DIARY OF A REPORTER

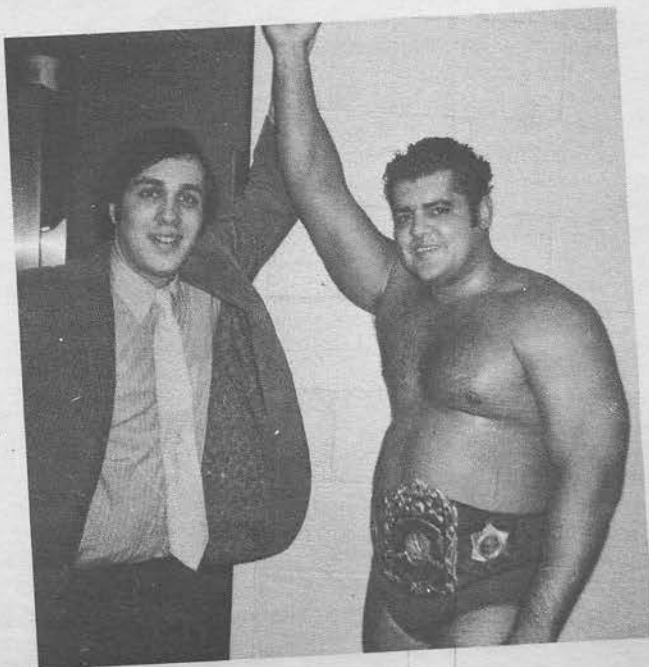
I shot a picture of him hiding a foreign object in his trunks and he caught me. For my trouble I was picked up, thrown down on the floor and beaned repeatedly with a garbage can. One of my fellow reporters was there and he snapped photos of it. Luckily, Abdullah didn't get him. Before Abdullah did too much harm, his manager called the cops in and they restrained him.

My motto—stay away from him, far away!

Bull Curry is the same type of man. But you can talk to him. After an interview I asked Curry to pose for some pictures. What'd he do? he grabs a big floor ashtray and says, "Get this punk!" The ash tray landed on my head but I was able to snap a picture just before it did.

Later on that night, Curry was wrestling The Sheik. After the

One of the thrills of Bill's job is when he gets the chance to be on the scene during an historical event, such as this one (right) when Pedro Morales won the W.W.W.F. title. "Our magazines got an exclusive interview from Pedro that night," Bill said. "It's exciting to interview a wrestler right after he's won a title," he adds.





Sheik (above) once smashed my camera to bits! I'll never be able to forget Wolfman's wild attack (right). Sammartino is always a delightful gentleman.



match, in which he'd been disqualified. I climbed up on the ring apron to get a picture of him. What a mistake that was. He grabbed me by the hair and started slugging me! Then, once down, he ripped open my suit jacket!

Finally, Tony Marino, standing in the dressing room area, saw what was happening and came to the rescue. But that didn't stop Curry. He just let me loose and turned the entire ringside into a shambles before the cops dragged him back to the dressing room. Hope I don't meet up with him again!

The Sheik, much like Abdullah The Butcher, is unpredictable. One time, in a dressing room, I left my camera on a bench while interviewing Crusher Verdu, who was sharing The Sheik's dressing room.

After finishing the interview, I found The Sheik with a hypnotic look on his face, staring into my



camera, which he had in his hands. "Hey! Put that down!" I told him. "He gave me a crazed look and then threw my camera down and smashed it!"

Crusher Verdu ran over to stop him but was floored by the crazed madman. I stormed out of the dressing room for my life. At present, I still refuse to go into any dressing room The Sheik occupies!

Stan Stasiak. Not very weird. He's more of a business man. He trains vigorously. I've known Stasiak since 1971 and he's constantly reminded me that he will be the world champ one day. It came true when he defeated Morales. He was one of Pe-

dro's toughest opponents and knew Pedro's every move since he wrestled him quite often.

I was the victim of Stasiak's heart punch. Being curious, I asked to be hit with it and it knocked me unconscious. I was later hospitalized. But I asked for it.

In terms of personality, Stasiak prefers to be a loner. He looks like a very deep-thinking man. The only man he communicates with is the Grand Wizard and any in his clan. Sometimes he mixes with Lou Albano's men in tag team matches.

"I prefer single bouts," he says. Stasiak could very well become champion again.



Above: Wild Bull Curry throws an ashtray at me before I take his picture. Right: John Tolos will always talk to me—about himself! Below: Stan Stasiak shows me his heart punch. I was hurt for over two weeks!



National Wrestling Alliance champion Jack Brisco is a very likeable fellow. His deep voice commands you to listen when you meet with him. Jack is always on time, never late for appointments. Each time I was scheduled to interview him, he was early. Earlier than me for that matter.

Jack's one of these "plain folk" you just have to take a liking to. He's polite and well-mannered at all times.

"I feel if a person is in the public eye," Jack says, "he should uphold a good image especially in sports. I'm proud of the way I live."

Jack Brisco. An easy guy to get along with. You just can't find any-

thing bad about him personally.

Always happy. Always on. That's Pedro Morales. Pedro loves to meet people. When I first met Pedro in 1970 he was very cordial and wanted to make friends quickly. Pedro likes to joke. He's also a very snappy dresser and loves to hear people compliment him about his clothes. He's a great person to talk to.

Bruno Sammartino's charisma is unbelievable. You could be in a ballpark among thousands of people and Bruno will walk in. You'll find everyone staring at him. Bruno's very down to earth. He's an extremely honest guy and likes to express his opinions freely.

Usually soft spoken, it takes a heck of a lot to make Bruno mad. He enjoys talking about his career and he's very proud of it. Can you blame him?

Bruno truly is a living legend.

Truly a maniac. That's the unpredictable and viciously bloodthirsty Wolfman. Trying to arrange an interview with this madman and his manager Fred Blassie resulted in the Wolfman attacking me and trying to bite my forehead wide open in hopes of drawing some of my blood. Thank goodness that special police, who were called by a fellow reporter, came to my rescue and saved me from certain doom.

Even after they managed to stop Wolfman from biting me, he and Blassie chased after me with a lead pipe! They are bananas! When it comes to trying to interview someone again, it won't be Wolfman!

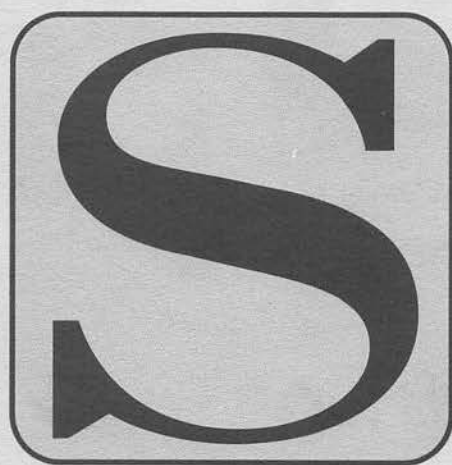
Finally we come to perhaps the most interesting and unique character I've met—the Grand Wizard/Abdullah Farouk.

He is, or professes to be, two distinct individuals. In the east he is the Wizard. When he appears with The Sheik he is Abdullah Farouk.

In a verbal battle against anyone Wizard *always* comes out the victor. He's a master of many languages, has studied various philosophies and religions, is a legal expert and a business genius. He could be a corporation president or a great politician. During an interview he'll slay you with words you never knew existed and not let you get a word in edgewise. He always has time for an interview—unless he feels you've wronged him somehow. Then he won't talk to you.

I've met dozens of other wrestlers and managers. My experiences could fill a book. Each is a story in himself. However, I know there are many more to meet, many more stories to write.

Sound like an interesting life? You bet it is. And I wouldn't trade places with anyone! □



How WE Made The **STING-SAVAGE**

Dream Team A Reality

Think wrestlers
don't read
about
themselves?
When Sting and
Randy Savage
read that we
said they were
jealous of each
other, they
became
determined to
prove us wrong!

By Andy Rodriguez

STING NEVER WAS one to bash the press. Neither was Randy Savage. Both wrestlers have had plenty of negative stories written about them, yet they both accept criticism gracefully.

"Just comes with the territory," Sting shrugged.

"They have a right to say what they please," Savage sighed.

Savage's stunning move to WCW early in 1995 was, of course, a juicy story for mat journalists everywhere. The questions abounded: What prompted the "Macho Man" to make the switch? With whom will he team—and feud? How will he get along with Hulk Hogan, his old friend and enemy?

Again, there was a lot of speculation, most of it way off the mark. None of it bothered Savage much.

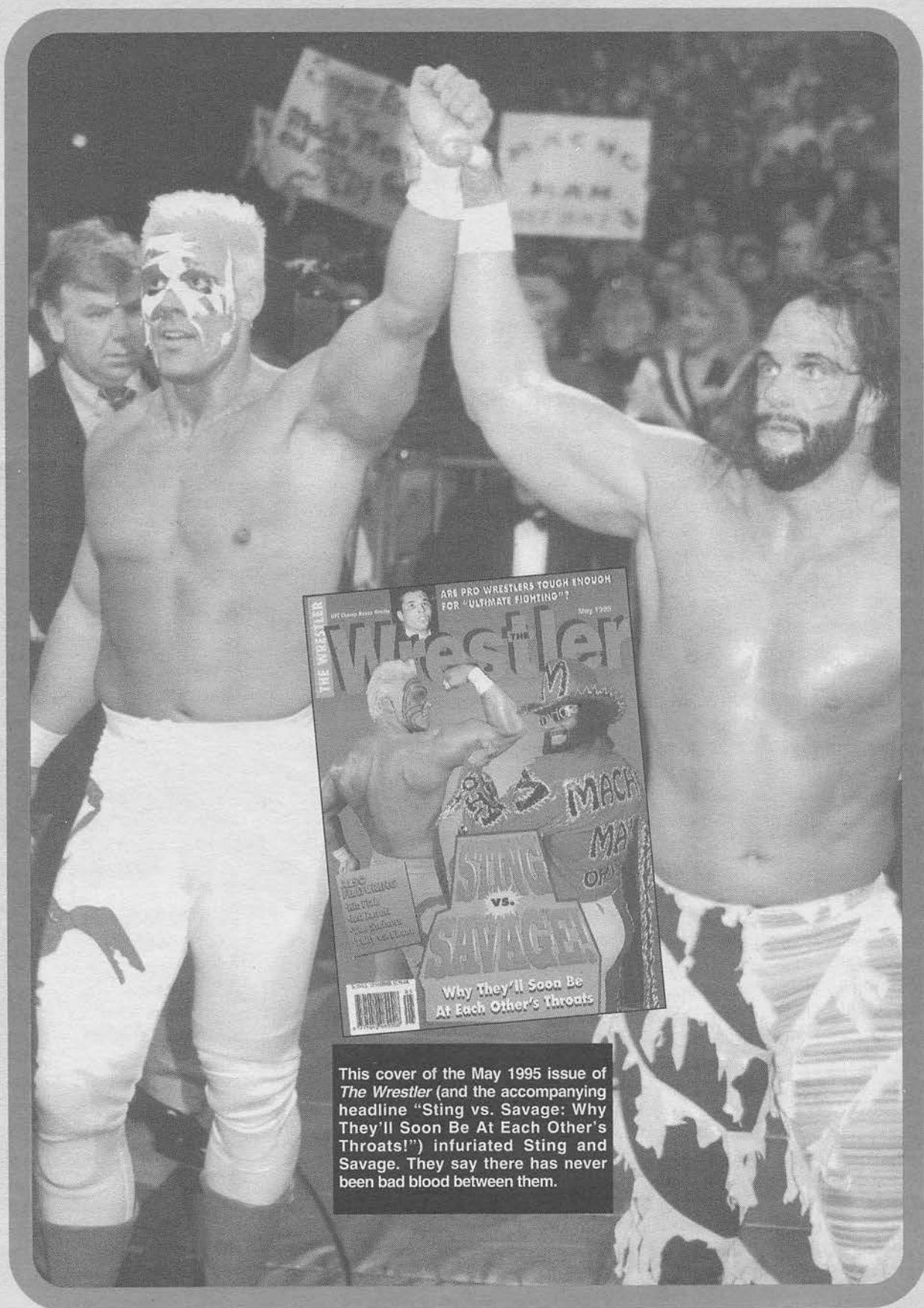
Well, almost none of it. There was one story that did.

"What the hell is this?" he screamed. "This is the biggest piece of garbage I ever read! Who wrote this?"

The article to which Savage was referring appeared in the May 1995 issue of *The Wrestler*, one of our sister publications. It had the headline "Sting vs. Randy Savage: Why They'll Soon Be At Each Other's Throats!" It suggested that Savage might have a big problem not with Hogan, Ric Flair, or Big Van Vader, but with *Sting*. It implied the "Macho Man" was eager to steal some of the "Stinger's" glory, that he was looking forward to replacing him in the hearts of WCW faithful, and that a feud between them was destined to happen.

Sting read the story, too. He also didn't like what he saw. Sources revealed that Sting was jealous of Savage. They said the "Stinger" felt the "Macho Man" was trying to take over as Hogan's number-one ally; they said he was concerned that Savage would, indeed, take fans away from him.

"That's nonsense—absolute nonsense," Sting insisted. "I don't have a thing against Randy Savage. I like the man a lot. Somebody is trying to stir up trou-



This cover of the May 1995 issue of *The Wrestler* (and the accompanying headline "Sting vs. Savage: Why They'll Soon Be At Each Other's Throats!") infuriated Sting and Savage. They say there has never been bad blood between them.

ble, and it really ticks me off. It's irresponsible reporting!"

The story, written by Dave Rosenbaum, had both men steaming. Neither had ever been so angered by something that had been written about him.

Instead of forgetting about it and moving on, though, the "Macho Man" and the "Stinger" decided to prove that not only was the article false, but that they could, on the contrary, be great tag team partners.

The tag team of Sting and Savage was born.

"If we didn't do this," said Savage, "people were gonna keep thinking there was bad blood between us. I don't want anybody to doubt that me and Sting are solid with each other. This should seal it!"

"I don't know how long we'll be a team," Sting offered, "but as long as we are a team, nobody will doubt our resolve. We expect a lot of challenges from guys determined to split us. Let them try. We're for real!"

A challenge quickly came from another newly formed tag team: Avalanche and Big Bubba Rogers.

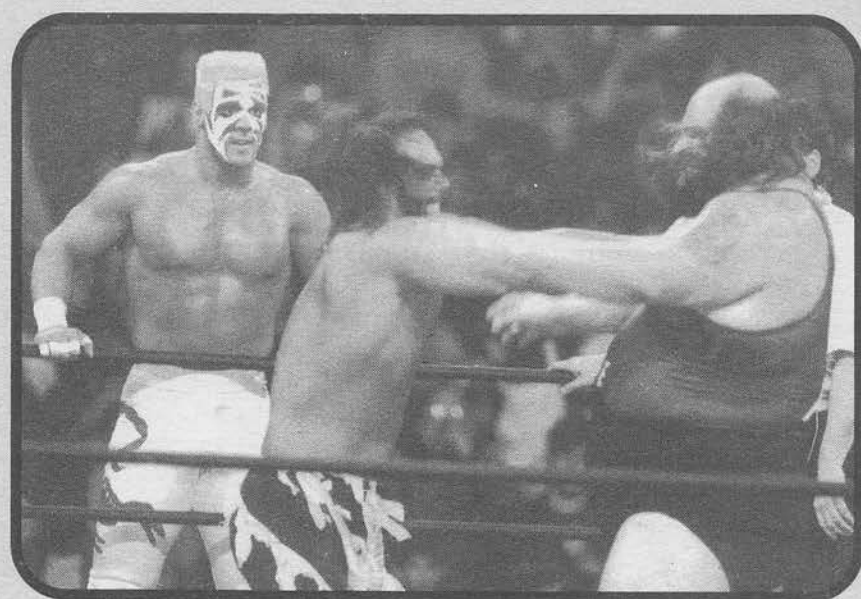
"Sting and Savage are both too busy kissing Hulk Hogan's butt to watch each other's backs!" taunted Rogers. "Me and Avalanche'll take them on gladly. I don't expect we'll have much trouble, either!"

"I've been pounding Sting for months!" yelled Avalanche, "but he still doesn't have the sense to quit! Now he brings in Savage for back-up. It's too late, Sting! Give it up!"

Avalanche's arrogance hasn't helped him. Sting and Savage are winning—and winning big—all around the WCW circuit. Their most notable victory came at SuperBrawl V, where Sting pinned Avalanche in view of a huge pay-per-view audience.

"Maybe that'll shut Avalanche up!" Sting scoffed.

Whether it does or not, Sting and Savage have demonstrated they



are more than an ordinary tag team; they're a "dream team," definitely capable of winning the WCW World tag team title.

"They wrestle really well together," said Dustin Rhodes. "You'd think they've been together for years. Hard to believe it's only been a couple of months. Who knows how far they could go?"

As thrilled as they are with their success, both men say they aren't about to start patting themselves on the back.

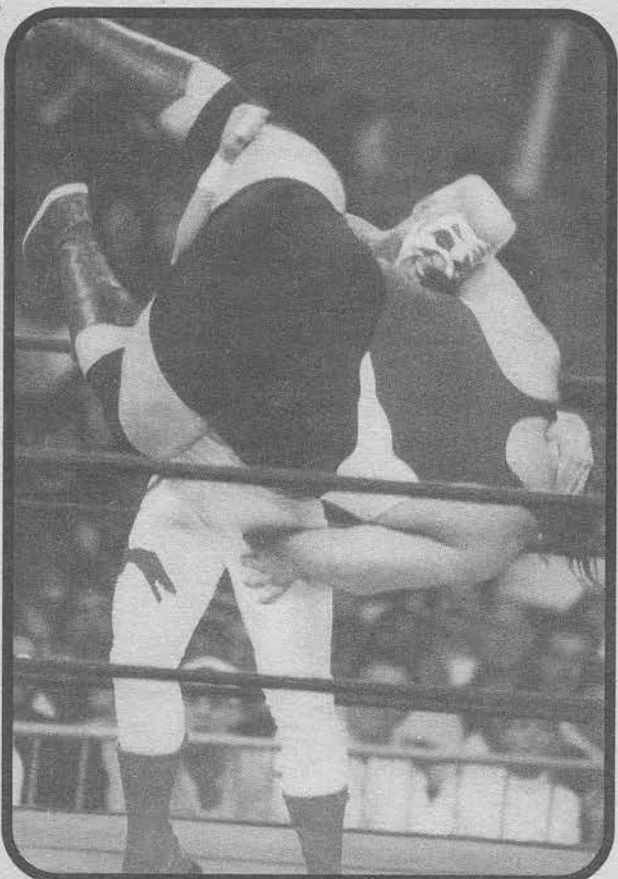
"Look," Savage said, "I didn't come to WCW to form a tag team. I came here to win the World title. The fact that Hulk Hogan wears that belt hasn't changed my goal. What me and

Sting have is great, but

it's not going to be permanent!"

"Tagging up with Randy is one of the best things I've ever done,"

Randy Savage gives Avalanche a shove while Sting looks on intently. For now, this new WCW "dream team" is focused on eliminating Avalanche and Big Bubba Rogers. The fans would like to see them pursue the World tag title.



Sting hasn't had that much trouble beating the 502-pound Avalanche on his own. He's having a lot more fun doing it with the "Macho Man" at his side, however.

Sting offered. "That doesn't mean I've abandoned everything else. We'll take this as far as it goes, and when it's over, we'll both know it."

There's a little problem, though, that might get much bigger. A growing number of fans want to see Sting and Savage more frequently. They want to see them make a serious run at those tag team belts.

"They may become victims of their own success," offered longtime commentator Gordon

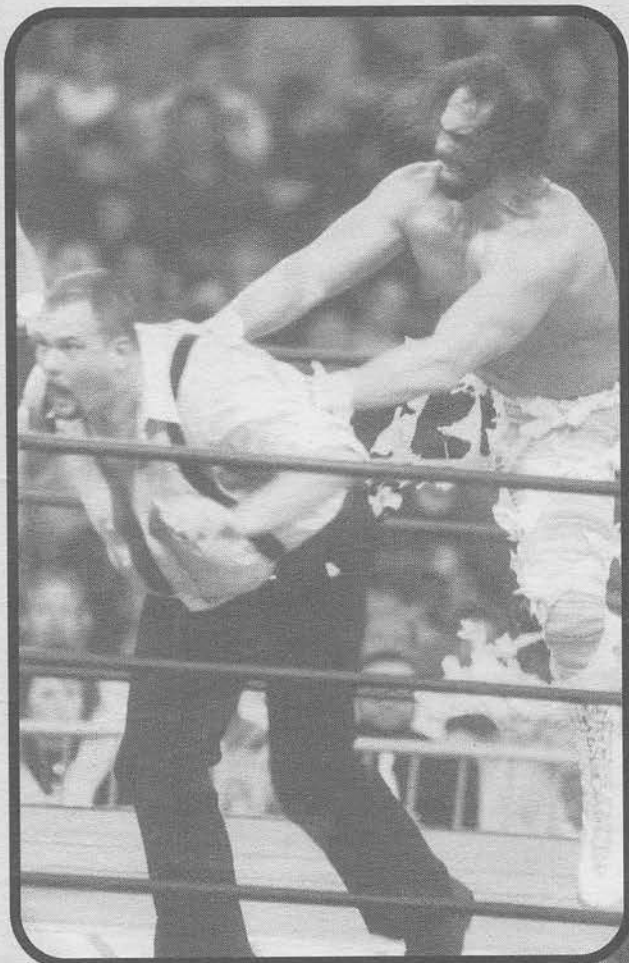
Solie. "They may have hooked up merely to spite a group of journalists, but they may find they've heaped upon themselves a whole new set of obligations. It's the law of unintended consequences."

Consequences, perhaps. But Sting and Savage aren't thinking much about consequences. They're just having fun.

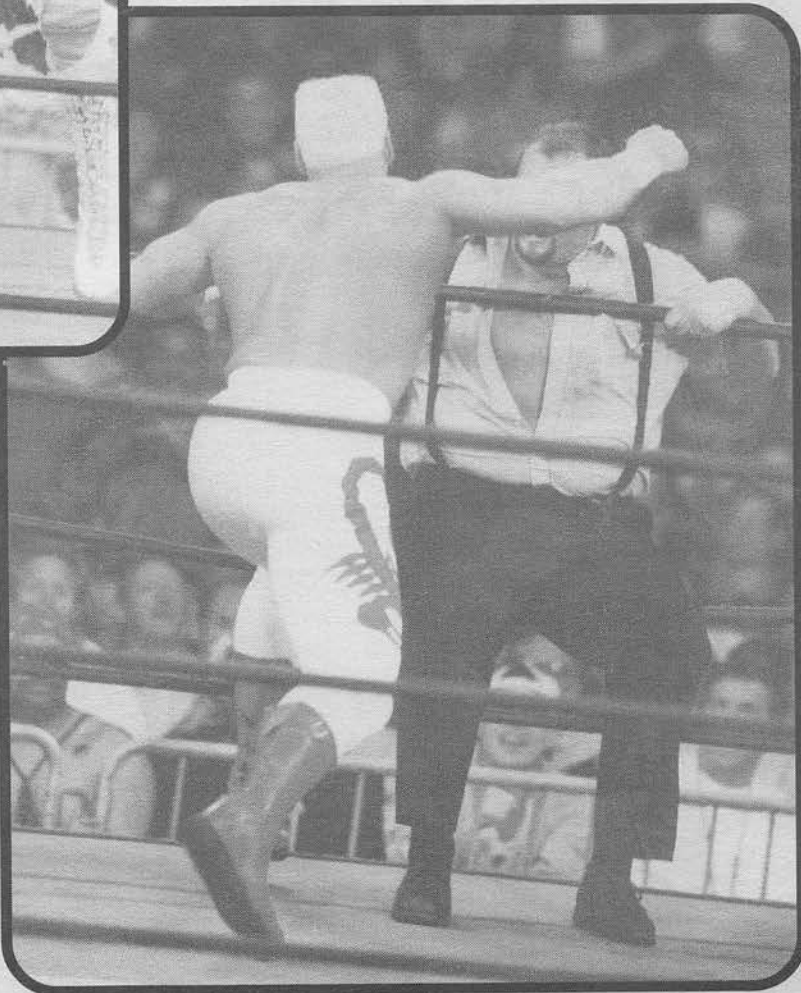
"You know something?" Savage admitted. "Not only is Sting a tremendous partner, he's a great guy. He's taken a lot of pressure off me coming to WCW."

"Randy's one of the best ever in this sport," Sting said. "I learn from him every day. And the two of us together in the ring? It's a pretty wild pair!"

All thanks to us. Hey, guys, how about a thank-you note at least? □



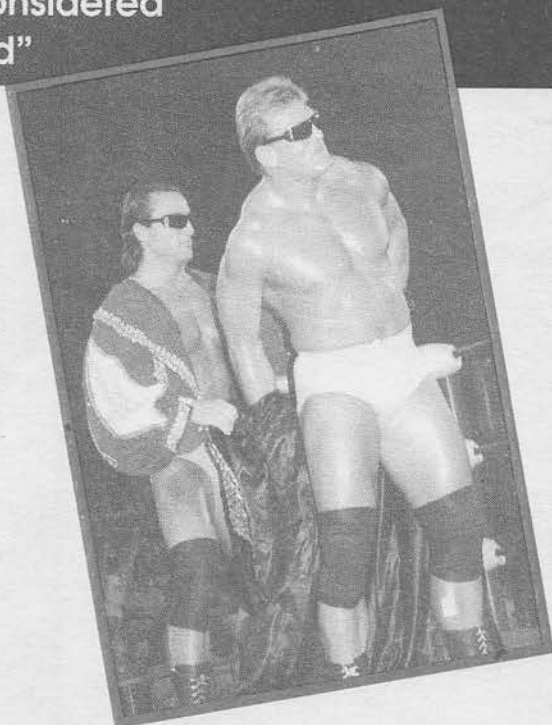
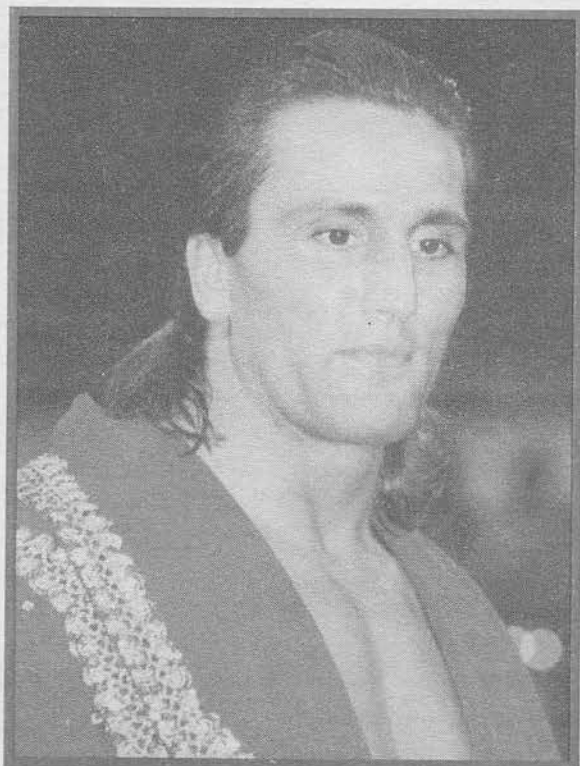
For Big Bubba, this dream team has been a nightmare. If Savage isn't driving a knee into his back (above), Sting is pounding him with a clothesline (right). Savage and Sting have discovered that they genuinely like each other, too.



Pretty Wunderkind?

PAUL ROMA IS LOOK FOR THE 'WRIGHT'

Paul Roma thinks Alex Wright is the biggest phony in WCW. But that doesn't mean he hasn't considered forming a tag team with "Das Wunderkind"



Paul Roma (left) is at a crossroads. He wants to continue wrestling in tag teams, but isn't sure if he's better off sticking with Paul Orndorff (above) or making his current arch-rival, Alex Wright (opposite page, right), his new partner.

ING PARTNER

By Andy Rodriguez

NO ONE WHO was in the rulebreakers' locker room at Baltimore Arena after Paul Roma's loss to Alex Wright at SuperBrawl expected this story to be written. As Roma threw chairs and spewed profanities, some of his fellow rulebreakers had trouble recalling ever having seen such anger and fury.

"Alex Wright!" Roma screamed. "Alex Wright! How could I lose to him? How could I lose to that kid? I got ripped off! I got screwed! It's a joke! I swear to God next time we meet I'll tear his head off his scrawny neck!"

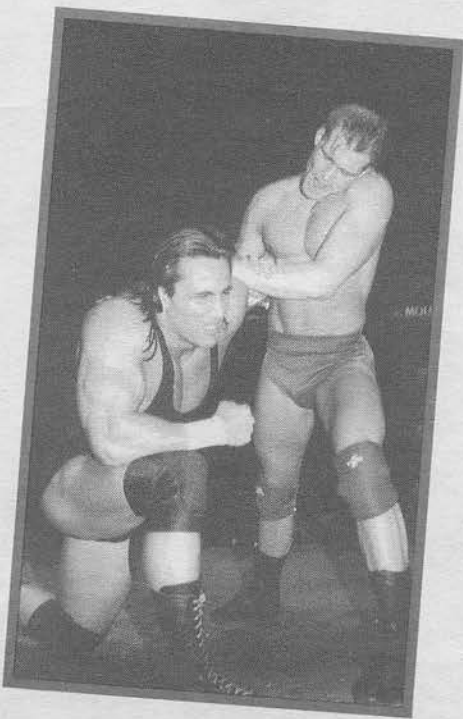
A few minutes later, Roma calmed down. A few days later, he started looking for a new tag team partner. Guess who he called first?

Paul Roma and Alex Wright might soon be WCW's newest tag team. There have been stranger pairings, but few as incompatible.

"Paul never thought it would come to this, either," said Arn Anderson, who won the WCW World tag team title with Roma in 1993. "But the circumstances dictated otherwise."

A few months ago, Roma didn't think he needed a new partner. He was very comfortable having "Mr. Wonderful" Paul Orndorff at his side. The team called "Pretty Wonderful" wasn't enjoying tremendous success, but they had established themselves as a formidable duo. They even won the WCW World tag team title twice in 1994.

"To have someone like 'Mr. Wonderful' in my corner is the ultimate," Roma said in an interview





Wright has caught Roma off-guard a few times. He put him away with a sunset flip in this bout. "Das Wunderkind" has been so good that Roma can't help but think what it would be like to have the sensation on his side.

last spring. "He knows so much about this business, it's incredible. I thought I knew it all, but he proved I wasn't even close."

Not too long after Roma made those comments, though, Orndorff exhibited a wanderlust, drifting in and out of WCW. Nagging injuries slowed him down. That obviously made it difficult for him and Roma to be an effective team.

At first, Roma's friends say, he accepted Orndorff's problems as part of the business, but eventually became disgusted with his veteran cohort.

"Paul [Roma] was beginning to think about ending his involvement with tag teams anyway," Anderson revealed. "But he decid-

ed he liked the tag scene, and he wanted Orndorff to get serious about it. That's why he really started to get ticked off with the man."

Still, Roma did not begin the search for a new partner, deciding instead to try persuading "Mr. Wonderful" that keeping "Pretty Wonderful" together on a full-time basis would be his wisest move. He failed.

"I just told Paul I had nothing against him," said Orndorff several days before SuperBrawl. "I told him I was doing what was best for me. I said we could keep 'Pretty Wonderful'

going, just not as much as he might want. I'm sorry he doesn't like that, but that's too bad."

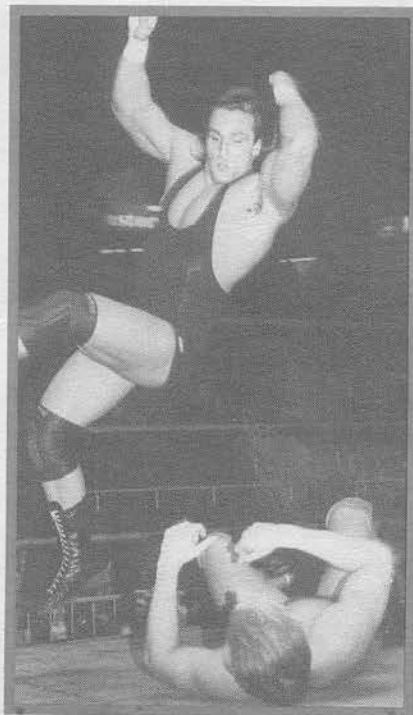
In the meantime, Roma had begun feuding with Wright, the German "Wunderkind" who had swept into WCW with a lot of promise. Roma enjoyed battling the teen sensation, telling cohorts he could not stand Wright and his whole "pretty-boy" image. That's strange, considering Roma's nickname is "Pretty" Paul.

Roma also didn't like hearing everyone call Wright WCW's latest heartthrob. He has always enjoyed the company of the lovely ladies who show up to watch WCW TV tapings at Center Stage Theater in Atlanta, but he hates

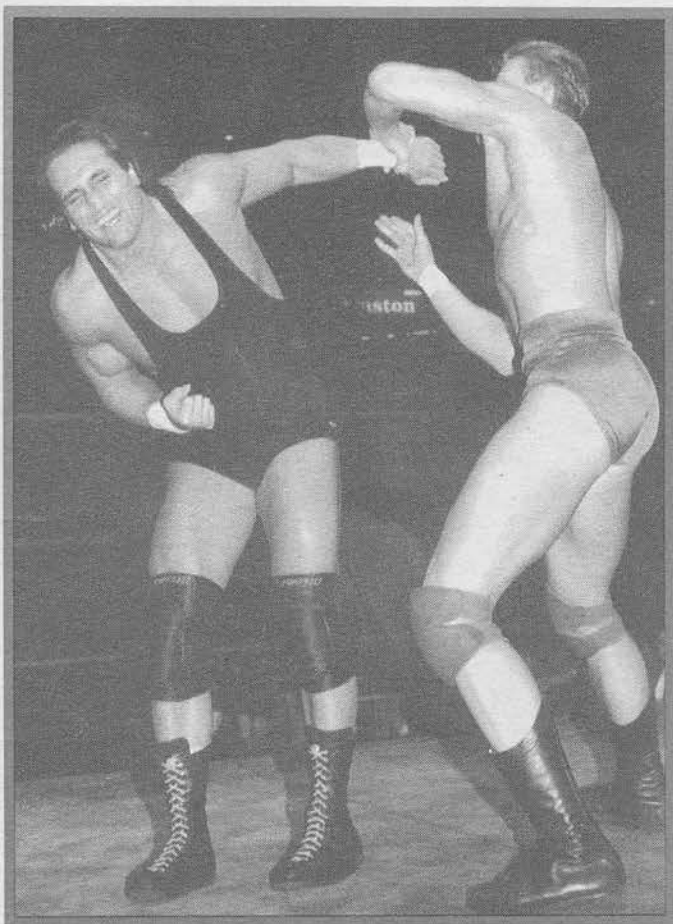
the word heartthrob. He thinks a heartthrob is someone fans love purely for his looks, not for his talent. In pounding Wright night after night, it's almost as if Roma was trying to knock some sense into the kid's head and saying to him, "What's the matter with you?"

Roma's dislike for Wright reached a high point with his loss to the German at SuperBrawl. That anger was still fresh within him when he decided to put his partnership with Orndorff on hold and begin a search for a new partner.

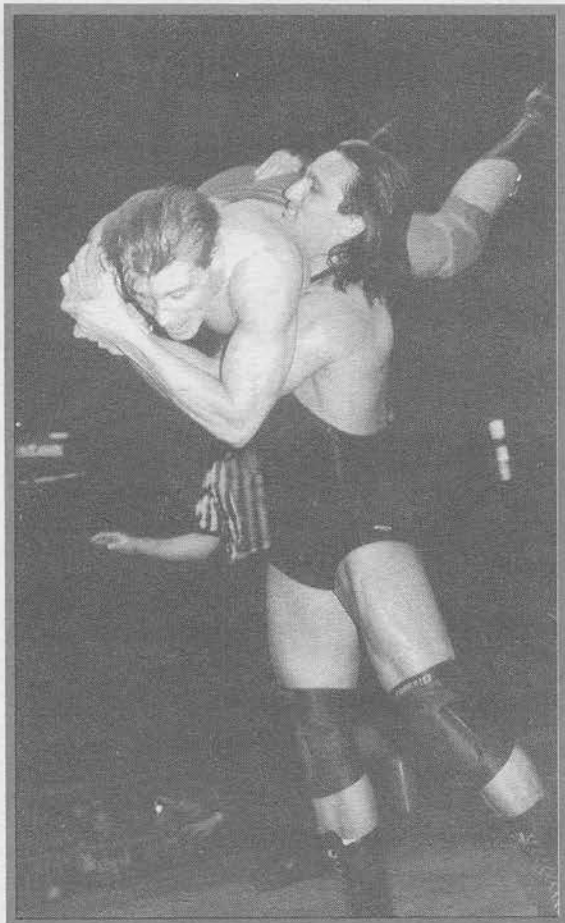
"He called to ask me for some advice," Anderson recalled. "We mulled over a few names, and the whole time he kept talking about 'that punk kid Wright.' Finally, I



One of the reasons Roma keeps trying to give Wright terrible beatings, say some observers, is that he wants him to take his wrestling more seriously and not worry about being a heartthrob and teen idol.



Wright isn't the most powerful wrestler, but he's strong enough to get Roma winning from the pain of a wristlock (left). Put Roma's brute strength (below) and aerial skills together with Wright's skills, and you'd have a very good team!



said to him, 'Why don't you ask Wright to be your partner? You guys both love that high-risk style; you might work well together. Sure, you hate his guts, but that never stopped a lot of great tag team combinations.'

Anderson remembered that Roma laughed off the suggestion, but called him back a week later and told him he was giving Wright some serious thought.

"He said as much as he hates Wright," recalled Anderson, "he respects him as a wrestler. He said it might work, provided he could swing the kid around to his way of thinking. That's all I've heard from Paul since."

Other associates of Roma's

confirm he is thinking earnestly about asking his enemy to be his new partner. Roma himself admits he has called Wright, but insists they have not agreed on anything as of yet.

"I told him he was a damn good wrestler for a punk kid, and he should be proud he's able to stand in there against someone of my talents," Roma said. "I also told him he might want to consider tag teams, and I said that to survive in WCW, you might have to make some unusual allies."

Wright said he had heard rumors floating around about a Roma-Wright teaming, but still

was surprised to hear from Roma.

"Pretty Wunderkind"? It's not official, but experts say Roma and Wright would form an exciting duo, maybe one that could contend for the WCW World tag title. "I'd love to see it happen," Sting said. "I think they'd make a terrific team. They both love to fly."

Indeed, Roma and Wright probably could be WCW World tag team champs someday. But first, they have to stop feuding. □

No Longer Singing The Bruise

JACOB THE 48 SECONDS

Rather than get their
butts kicked repeatedly
in WCW,
The Bruise Brothers——
Ron and Don Harris——
disappeared into the
mountains and
emerged as new men:
Jacob and Eli Blu!

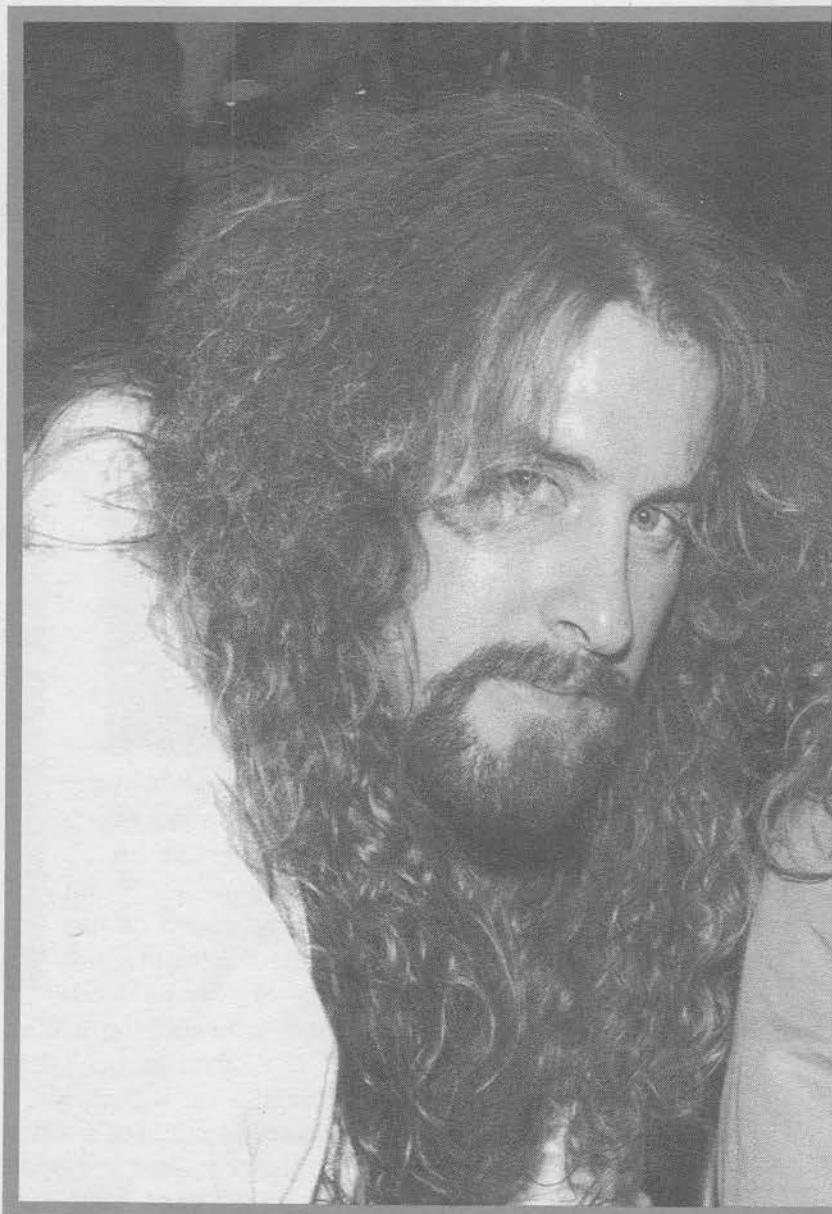
By Dave Rosenbaum

THE APPALACHIAN region of the United States, which stretches from Tennessee in the South to the southernmost tip of upstate New York in the North, is no place for people who like taking the easy way out. The favored modes of transportation are four-wheel drive vehicles and pickup trucks, and the favored parking spot is any front lawn. The winters are rugged, and the summer nights are cold. People are differ-

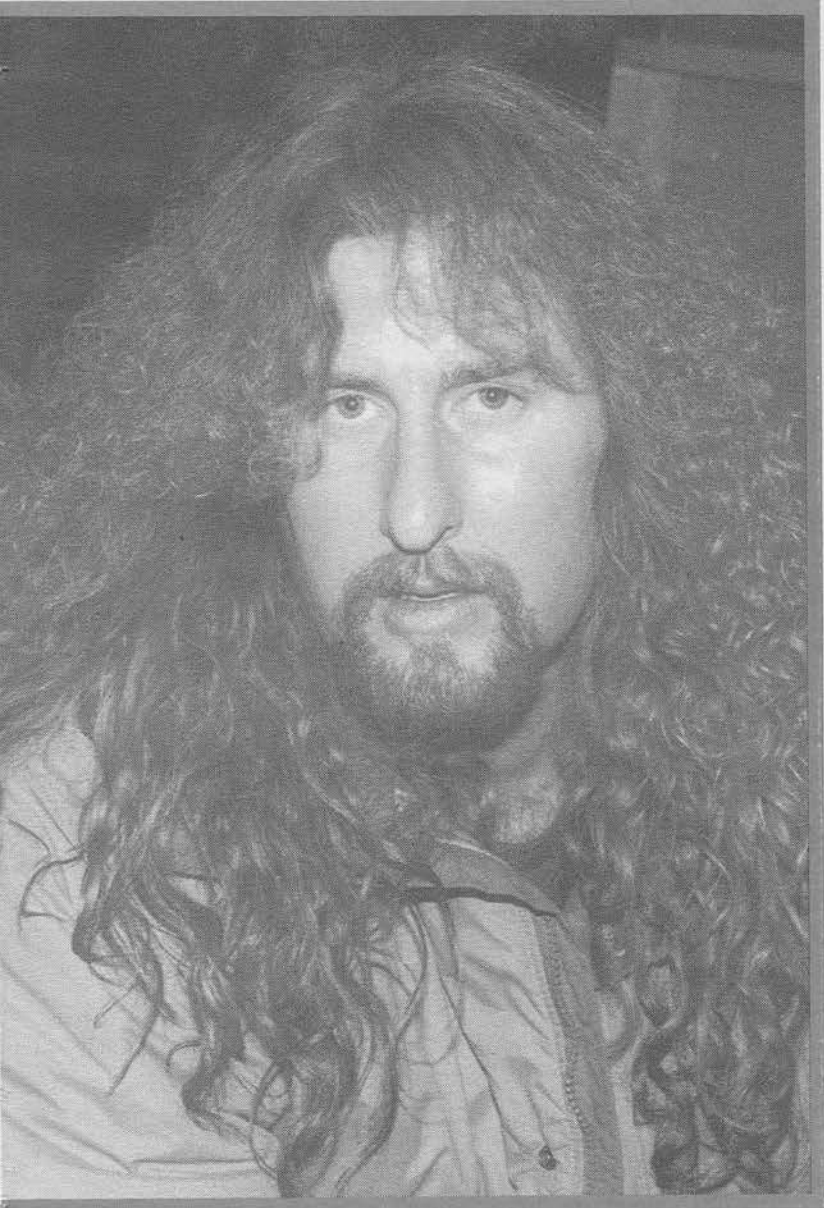
ent there. Neither Shawn Michaels nor Alex Wright would be welcome.

But it's a great place to get lost. You can easily travel 50 miles by foot and not see a single trace of

humanity, and if you were to get stranded on one of the high mountain roads, there's a good chance help wouldn't be around for days. Any help that arrives might not be very friendly.



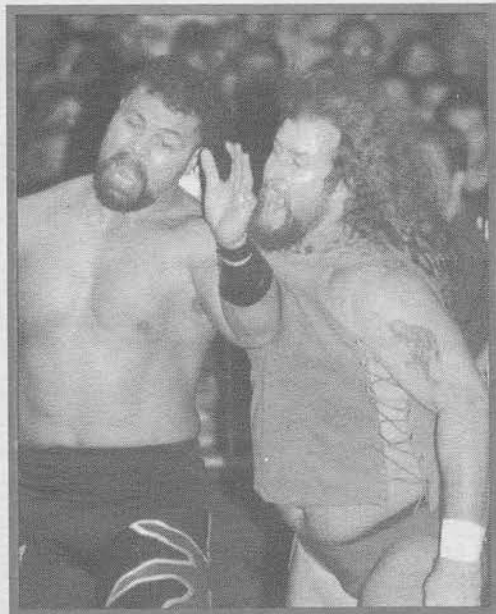
& ELI: THAT CHANGED THEIR LIVES



The Appalachian Mountains turned out to be a great place for Jacob and Eli Blu to get lost in the summer of 1994. Rather than being as high as the highest mountain, they were lower than

the lowest valley after making their WCW debut on August 7, 1994, in Orlando, Florida.

Orlando is no place for rough-necks. It's the glitz capital of Florida. And it was no place for



The Headshrinkers held the WWF World tag team title for four months in 1994, but they haven't fared well against Jacob and Eli Blu. These two country boys have been almost unbeatable in the WWF.

The Bruise Brothers, as Jacob and Eli were then known.

Their stay in WCW lasted 48 seconds. Federation officials fed them to the lions, and Hulk Hogan and Sting hungrily gobbled them up. The Bruise Brothers entered the ring for their WCW debut and didn't know what hit them when Hogan and Sting stormed the ring prior to the bell.

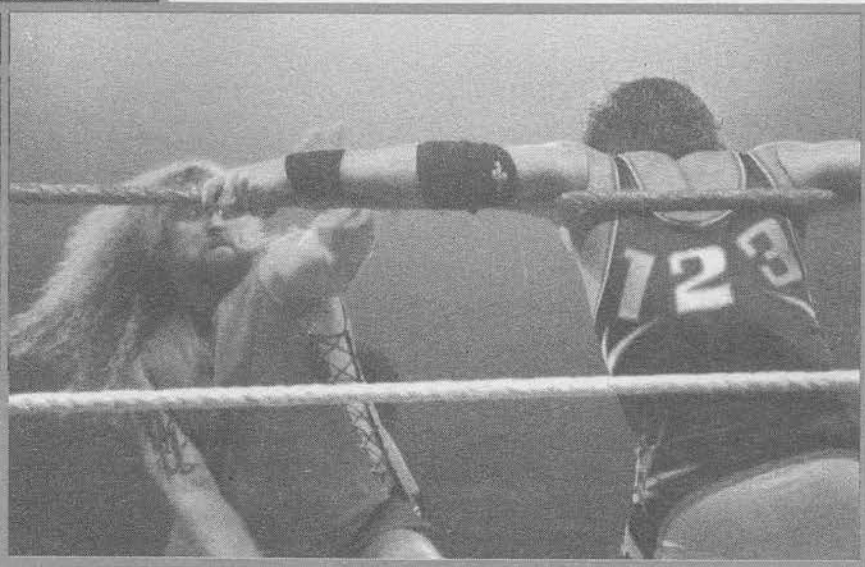
A Hogan legdrop and a cover later, their WCW careers were over.

They were kicked out by WCW officials, who for some reason weren't impressed by The Bruise Brothers' ability to get their butts



◀ The brothers Blu could have sulked after the embarrassing loss to Hogan and Sting. They instead chose to take time off and regroup. Headshrinker Sionne undoubtedly wishes they never came to the WWF.

◀ Eli surprised a lot of people—including The Kid—when he nearly won a WWF battle royal. Considering the sorry state of tag team wrestling in the WWF, the Blues stand a great chance of winning the World tag title soon.



kicked so quickly.

Many careers have been ended after similar disasters. The Bruise Brothers' careers weren't.

"That was one heck of a learning experience," Jacob told reporters after the match. "I thought there were rules against that kind of stuff, but I guess not. Maybe we should've read the rule-book or somethin' before we showed up."

At least they showed a sense of humor. Asked what he would do next, Eli told reporters: "We're definitely not going to no Disney World, I know that as sure as I know my own mother's name. Let me put it this way: You might not be seeing us for a while."

The next time we saw Jacob and Eli, they were no longer billing themselves as The Bruise Brothers. Nor were they calling themselves The Blues Brothers, which would have also been an appropriate name. Apparently

desirous of putting the past behind them, Jacob and Eli Blu—twin brothers—were simply calling themselves ... Jacob and Eli Blu.

And looking much better in the WWF than they ever looked in the 48 seconds of their WCW careers.

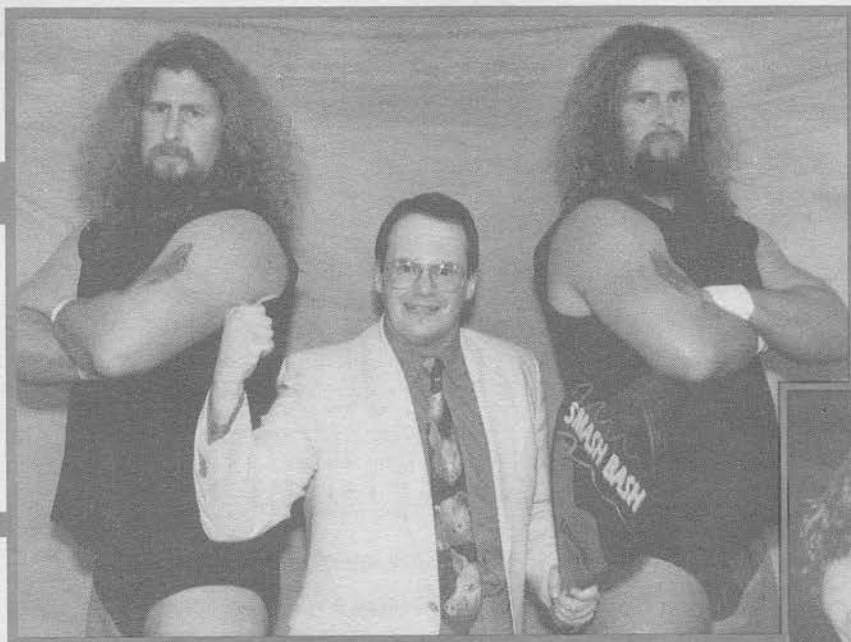
A few hours after their WCW humiliation, Eli and Jacob jumped into a pickup truck driven by their Uncle Zebakiah and headed for the peace, tranquility, and relative anonymity the Appalachian Mountains would offer them. Where in the Appalachian region were they headed?

"All over," said Jacob as their truck pulled away. "Nowhere and everywhere. We're going to travel around, see some old friends. Maybe we'll just sleep in the woods and live with all the critters

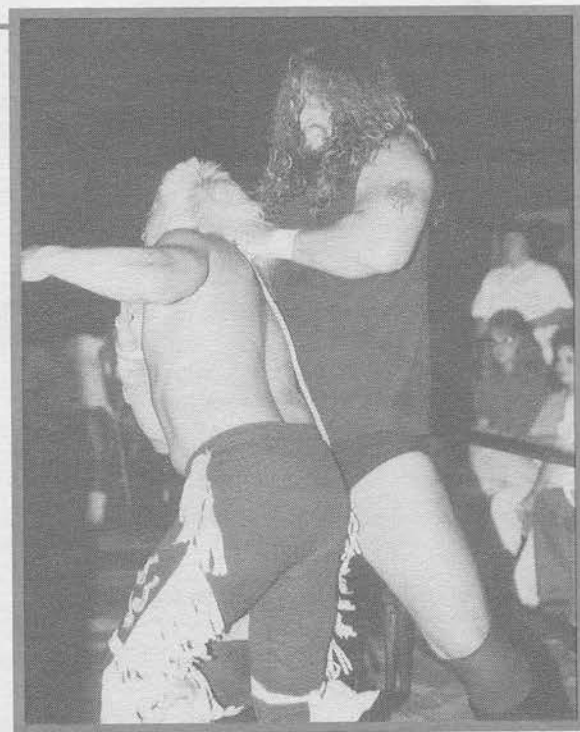
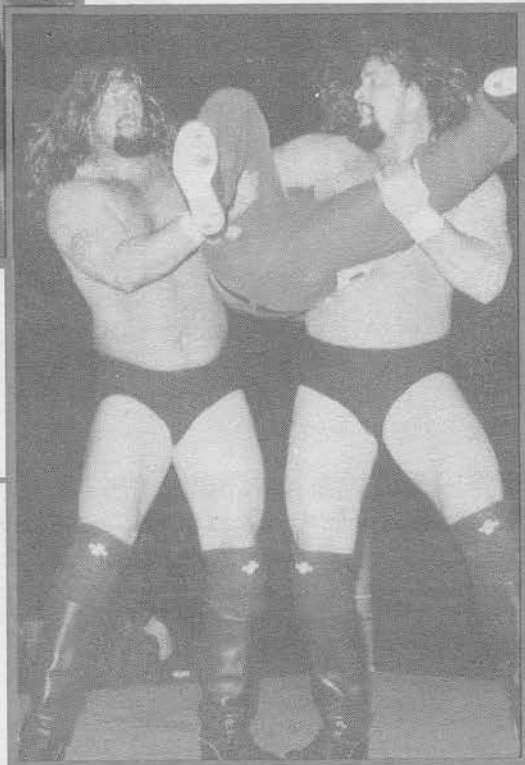
for a while. You know, get back to nature. Then we'll see what we can do about putting together one heckuva tag team again."

They succeeded. This rags-to-riches tag team has taken advantage of the WWF's weak talent pool and moved up among the top 10 tag teams in the world. Victories over The Headshrinkers and assorted other tag teams earned them immediate respect in the federation. Eli showed his skills when he was the last man eliminated by Davey Boy Smith in a 20-man battle royal held two days after the Royal Rumble. Now they're poised for a run at the WWF World tag team title, and nobody doubts they can win it.

Very simply put, Jacob and Eli realized after their 48 seconds in



▲ Under the guidance of Jim Cornette (above), The Bruise Brothers, as they were then known, terrorized The Rock 'n' Roll Express in Smoky Mountain two years ago (right). They have the talent to beat almost anyone, but until recently, they lacked confidence. ▶



▲ Eli and Jacob have wrestled in Japan and have impressed fans with their teamwork. They deserve credit for realizing last summer that they weren't ready for the WWF or WCW ... and working to make themselves better.

WCW that they still had a lot to learn. Rather than go through a trial by fire, they took a step back-

Kowalski. "I must say, it was a real civilized decision on their part. I don't think anybody would recog-

ward in order to take two steps forward. It's not easy for a couple of country boys to take humiliation night after night, and the Blues refused to do it, even if it meant giving up a lucrative contract.

"They obviously realized they weren't ready for the big time," said legendary rulebreaker Killer

nize them from before. They're a much more cohesive and confident tag team. I don't think they'd beat Sting and Hogan, even now, but the match would last a lot more than 48 seconds, and if Hogan and Sting stormed the ring, these guys would be ready for them."

Valuable lessons can be learned from losing. Humiliation can be humbling and educational.

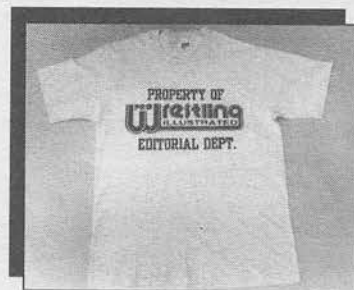
The Bruise Brothers took the high road, the one that went through the Appalachian Mountains. They emerged as Jacob and Eli Blu, unbruised and no longer singing the blues. □

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Call as often as you like. The contest begins February 1, 1995, and runs through May 31, 1995. There is no age restriction to participate. The charge for each call is \$1.49 per minute in the United States, and 49p (39p cheap rate) in the United Kingdom. The contest is sponsored by Advanced Telecom Services and London Publishing Co. in connection with Pro Wrestling Illustrated. No purchase necessary to participate. Void in MN, NJ, LA, GA, and where prohibited by law. All unclaimed prizes will be awarded via second-chance drawing. The odds of winning are dependent on the number of entries. Complete rules and mail-in entries are available by sending a self-addressed stamped envelope to PWI TRIVIA, P.O. Box 625, Devon, PA 19333, USA. To win, answer seven consecutive trivia questions correctly and you automatically qualify for the monthly drawing of one \$100* winner. (*Or for U.K. winners, the equivalent in pounds sterling at the time the winner is selected.) From February 1, 1995, until May 31, 1995, a total of 12 PWI T-shirts (retail value \$19.95 each) will be awarded. London Publishing Co. will select the winners. No substitutions allowed.

ALL-NEW QUESTIONS!

If you can answer the following questions, you could be the next \$100* winner!

Sting hails from which California beach community?

- 1) Malibu
- 2) Pacific Heights
- 3) Venice Beach
- 4) Newport Beach

Who managed The Moondogs to the WWF World tag team title?

- 1) The Grand Wizard
- 2) Capt. Lou Albano
- 3) Fred Blassie
- 4) Bobby Heenan

True or False: Rick Steamboat once briefly held the AWA World title.

- 1) True
- 2) False

Which of the following wrestlers has never held the WCW television title (as of December 31, 1994)?

- 1) Sting
- 2) Steve Austin
- 3) Rick Steiner
- 4) Scott Steiner

How did you do? If you're up for the challenge and want to put your wrestling knowledge to work, call now and go for the \$100!*

WRESTLING COOL!!!

What's In-And Why-In The Mat Sport Today

NOBODY CAN DEFINE cool. What's cool today is uncool tomorrow. In the 1970s, people were wearing bell-bottom jeans and Huk-a-Poo shirts. The Brady Bunch look is laughed at today. In the 1980s, rock 'n' wrestling was cool. Today, anybody who tries to combine the two forms of entertainment is looked upon as outdated and out of touch.

Cool is a matter of style, and styles change all the time. In professional wrestling, styles change like the wind.

In the 1960s and '70s, The Grand Wizard walked around in dark glasses and plotted against the WWF's fan favorites. He was cool, even if Vince McMahon didn't think so. But Capt. Lou Albano, another rulebreaking manager, wasn't considered cool until he sided with rock star Cyndi Lauper and the WWF's fan favorites.

Bob Backlund was never cool.

Sabu always has been.

Randy Savage can't keep his cool, but he is cool.

"Mean" Gene Okerlund, once the only voice of sanity in the WWF, became uncool when he joined WCW.

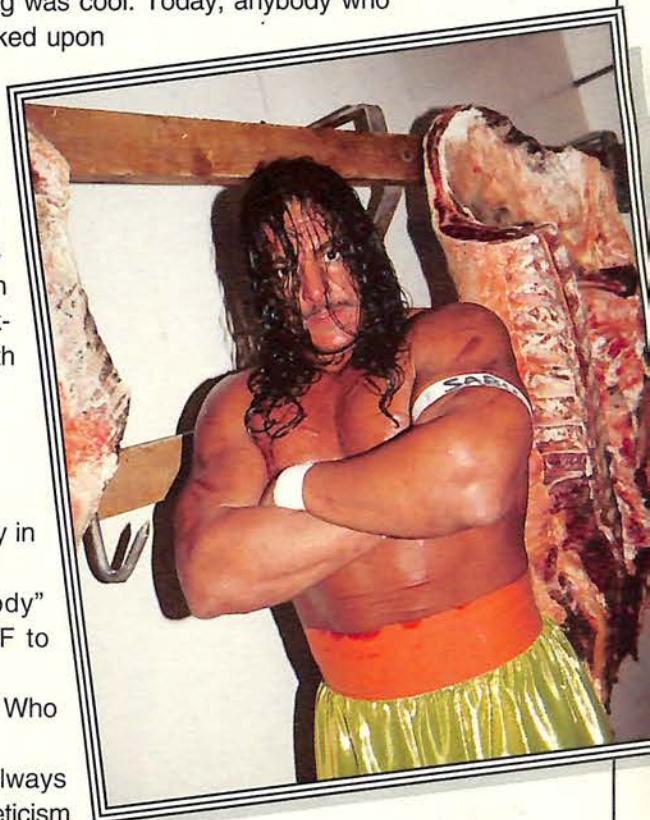
Bobby "The Brain" Heenan and Jesse "The Body" Ventura easily transferred their cool from the WWF to WCW.

Sometimes cool travels well, sometimes it doesn't. Who can tell?

One thing is certain: Professional wrestling has always been cool. What other sport combines incredible athleticism and excitement with so many unusual stars. Wrestling's tapestry is more colorful than any other sport's. Wrestling is the perfect sport for ESPN2, ESPN's off-beat younger brother.

In this special section, we take a look at what's cool and what's not cool in professional wrestling. It's a timely look at the people, places, and things in wrestling that make us take notice.

But don't blink. Like we said, what's cool today is uncool tomorrow. This section does not have lasting value. Read it now. Be cool.



WRESTLING COOL!!!

COOLEST BABE: TAMARA MURPHY FYTCH

Since we can't have Missy Hyatt in lingerie, we'll take Tamara Murphy Fytch in a bikini.

Any night of the week.

And any day, for that matter.

Former Smoky Mountain Wrestling manager Tamara Murphy Fytch is hot. She's babelicious. She's the kind of babe who causes collisions at intersections and makes the other girls on a beach jealous. She's blonde, and she has the body of a babe.

Fytch also has brains. She's a self-made woman who earned her first contract with Brian Lee, turned him into a rule-breaker, and led him to the SMW heavyweight title a few weeks later. She also led Lee and Chris Candido to the SMW tag team title and Candido to the NWA title before she and Chris were booted out of the federation.

They landed in the WWF, where federation officials will surely do everything in their power to make Ms. Fytch uncool.

We say just put her in a bikini, stick a microphone in her face, and parade her around in front of the camera. Makes us happy every time.



WRESTLING COOL!!!

COOLEST DUDE: SHAWN MICHAELS

Survey any 100 women at any WWF card, and chances are 95 of them will pick Shawn Michaels as the wrestler with whom they'd most love to date. Female wrestling fans are desirous of Michaels. They want to be *his* "Boy Toy."

Michaels knows it and doesn't seem to care.

Now, lest you think that not caring about something makes you cool, let us point out that it takes a special kind of man to stay cool and not sweat a drop when he's surrounded by hundreds of beautiful women, all of whom want him.

Sometimes Shawn Michaels shows men how to be men. Like when he found out he was to be the first man to enter the Royal Rumble this January; he didn't seem to mind that the most daunting task in wrestling was lying ahead of him.

Michaels won the Rumble anyway, outlasting 29 other competitors, and earned the World title shot against Diesel at WrestleMania XI.

Only a confident cat like Michaels would hire another muscular bodyguard like Sid Vicious after getting betrayed by his first muscular bodyguard, Diesel.

Only Shawn Michaels could dress as flamboyantly as Liberace and not look or act like Liberace.

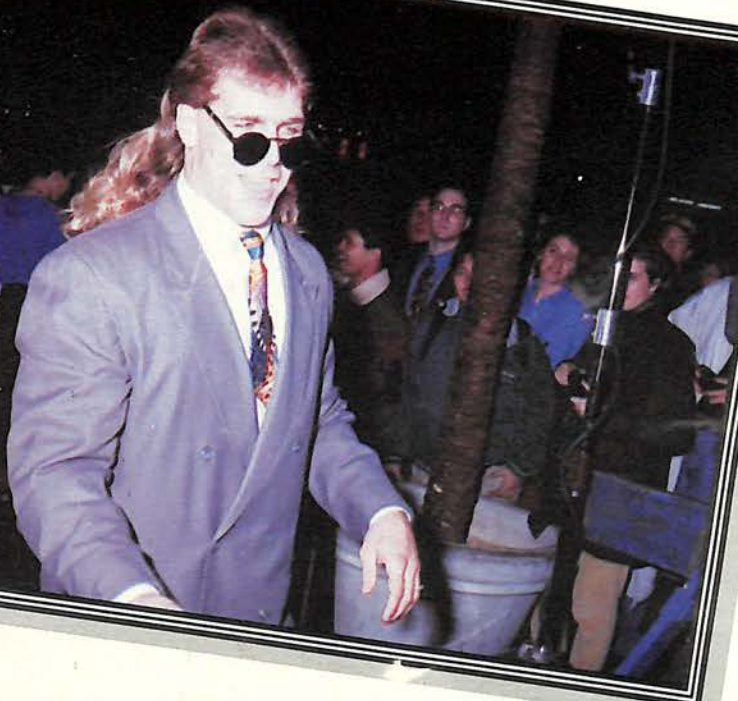
And only Shawn Michaels would be cool enough and smart enough to pace himself

on the road to the top, knowing that it's better to wait for the good stuff than to strike while the iron is hot and get burned three months later.

Diesel was WWF World tag team champion, Intercontinental champion, and World heavyweight champion all in one year.

Shawn Michaels is taking things a little slower. That's cool.

Confident



WRESTLING COOL!!!

COOLEST SPECIALTY MATCH: BARBED-WIRE BASEBALL BAT

On February 25, 1995, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, the creative promoters of Extreme Championship Wrestling wrapped a baseball bat in barbed wire and placed it on a pole. Then they placed feuding brothers Ian and Axl Rotten in the ring and told them to do whatever came naturally.

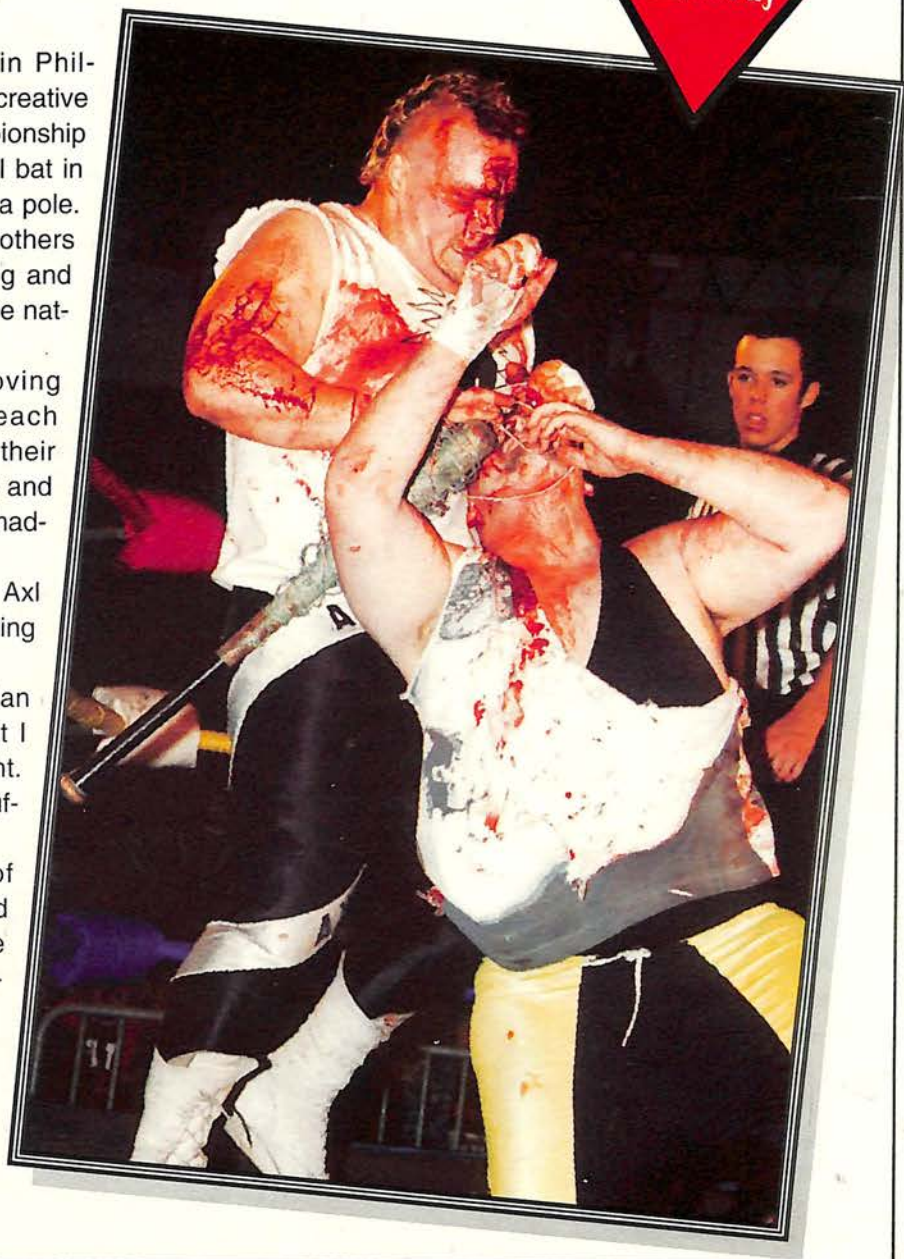
So they did what any loving brothers would do: beat each other to a bloody pulp with their bats wrapped in barbed wire and ended up looking like scary shadows of their former selves.

"I had a great time," said Axl Rotten, who pinned Ian following a piledriver.

"I don't care that I lost," Ian said. "All I care about is that I hurt him. He's hurting tonight. He's bleeding tonight. He's suffering tonight."

Back in the early days of *Pro Wrestling Illustrated* and its sister publications, we often called for the banishment of steel cage matches.

If only we had known.



Bloody

WRESTLING COOL!!!

COOLEST DAREDEVIL: SABU

Aerial

Not since the days of ... well, quite frankly, there has never been a high-flyer like Sabu, who really doesn't give a damn what happens to his body when he executes a particular maneuver. Aesthetic value has it all over medical advice when it comes to the ECW daredevil.

But the coolest thing about Sabu isn't the moonsaults he performs onto ringside tables, chairs, and the arena floor. Nor is it the daring dives he'll launch from any angle.

The coolest thing about Sabu is that after all the cool things he's done, not too many people know about him. And there's a reason for that.

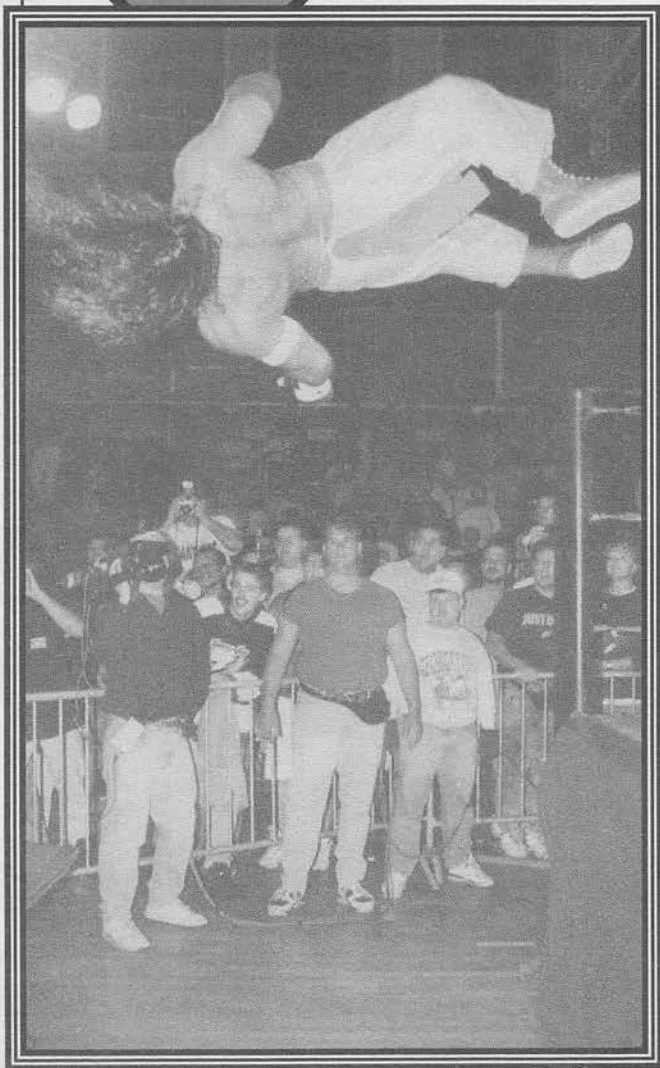
"I'm not going to sell out to the highest bidder," Sabu said through his interpreter. "I'll make my move when I'm ready ... and not before that."

That should make ECW's manic fans more manic, less depressive, and looking forward to more death-defying feats by Sabu, who has almost singlehandedly redefined aerial wrestling.

Until a few years ago, very few wrestlers dared attempt the moonsault. It seemed to be an almost impossible move: a standing backward somersault from the top rope onto a prone opponent. It required incredible leg strength, agility, and, most of all, courage. Now it's no longer a matter of whether a wrestler has a moonsault in his repertoire; it's a matter of how daring the wrestler is willing to get.

The moonsault isn't the only thing that makes Sabu so cool. He's calculated, vicious, and fully capable of brawling. His long-running feud with Terry Funk was one of the bloodiest in ECW's bloody history, and now Funk is back for more.

"Wrestling Sabu is a challenge," Funk admitted. "You know you're going to get hurt, and you know you're going to get winded, but he's a real challenge for an old-timer like me because he's what's new about wrestling. No, I don't like him, but he's good for wrestling."



WRESTLING COOL!!!

COOLEST RETIREE: RIC FLAIR

Maybe we spoke too soon. At press time, there were rumblings Flair would return to action in WCW, and he had already signed to wrestle legendary Japanese star Antonio Inoki on a card in North Korea in late-April. To Flair, retirement obviously doesn't mean buying a condo in South Florida. It means relaxing on the fringes of wrestling society and always threatening to return.

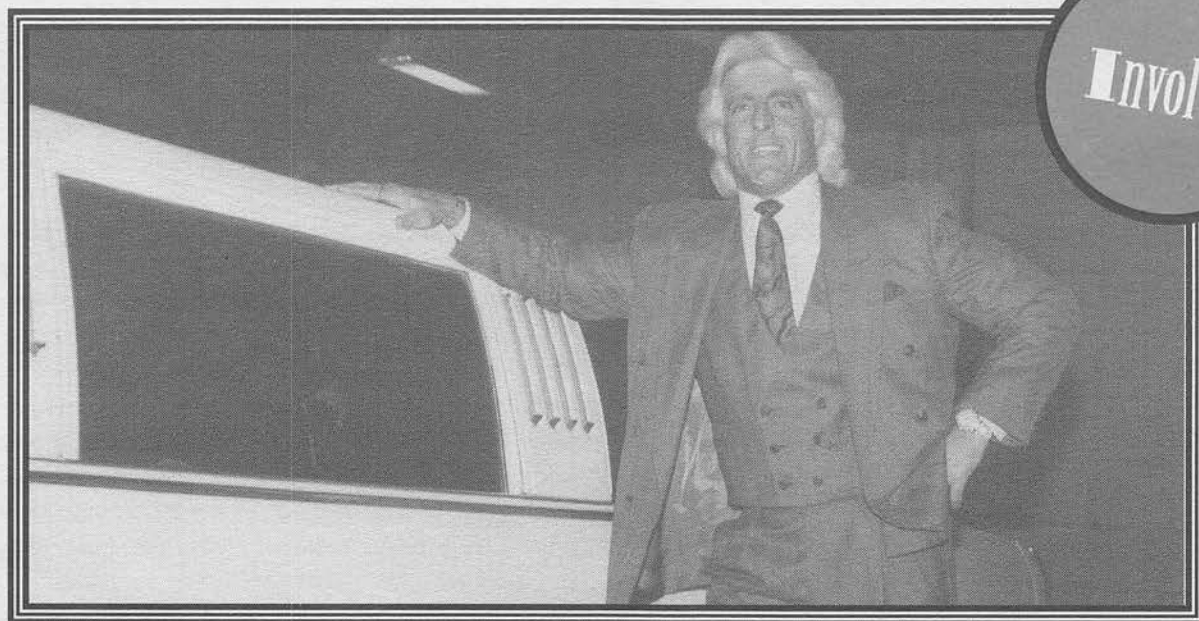
That's what makes the situation so fascinating. It always looks like Flair is going to defy the terms of his "loser-must-retire" match against Hulk Hogan and return to the squared circle. On the other hand, whenever he is asked about a possible return, Flair tells reporters and fans, "I'm happily retired."

Flair has managed to do in retirement what Hulk Hogan couldn't: remain in the wrestling spotlight. Everything is black and white with the "Hulkster." When he retires, he gets far away from the ring and makes movies and TV shows. When he returns to the ring, he gets far away from Hollywood.

Flair retired, but it's as if he never left. People haven't stopped talking about him. Just about every alleged expert in the world is convinced we'll see more Flair-Hogan matches, or maybe even more Flair-Big Van Vader bouts, sometime this summer. Flair sat at ringside for SuperBrawl V and interfered in the Hogan-Vader match. Yet, he still tells everyone the same thing.

"I'm happily retired. I'm not coming back. I don't want to come back," Flair said. "Hogan did for me what I should have done for myself a long time ago. But that doesn't mean I can't have my hand in wrestling. I love this sport, and I want to remain involved in some way."

In this case, it's as a secondary character who continues to play a major role in WCW doings. Only Flair could do that in retirement.



Involved

WRESTLING COOL!!!

COOLEST TV SHOW: *WWF MONDAY NIGHT RAW*

Style can be imitated, but it can't be copied. In the 1970s, millions of men tried to dress like John Travolta did in the movie *Saturday Night Fever*; they ended up looking like schleps in polyester leisure suits. More recently, young girls tried dressing like Madonna and ended up looking like Lolita in a nightmare.

WWF Monday Night Raw, now in its third year, is one of those rare concepts that worked once and will never work again. The WWF came up with the idea, did it right, and left no room for competition.

It was quite a gamble.

First, the WWF gambled on returning live wrestling to TV. The gamble was two-fold, and the negative effects could have been felt in attendance at arena cards and buy rates for pay-per-views.

The second gamble was holding the cards in small venues that might have made the WWF look like a small-time federation. After all, this was the federation that gave us wrestling in football stadiums. The Manhattan Center, the first site of *WWF Monday Night Raw*, held only a little more than 1,000 fans.

The third gamble was allowing the federation's top stars to wrestle on *WWF Monday Night Raw*, thereby possibly giving fans too much for free.

Everything came together. The Manhattan Center turned out to be the perfect site, because the WWF dressed it up in such a perfect manner, and used such bright TV lighting that it looked like wrestling in a palace. The fans, who could just about reach out and touch the stars, were rabid. Suddenly, attending *Raw* became cool.

Holding title matches on *Raw* made it a must-see show for all wrestling fans, as did the fact that many of the shows were being aired live. And *Raw* made it possible for the WWF to feed off of its pay-per-view events with immediate rematches, updates, and confrontations.

For years, *WCW Saturday Night* was the only must-watch wrestling TV show. Now it's *WWF Monday Night Raw*.



Rare

WRESTLING COOL!!!

COOLEST PROMOTION: ECW

Baseball bats, Singapore canes, and barbed wire. Wrestlers with names like The Pit Bulls, Mikey Whipwreck, Axl and Ian Rotten, The Sandman, Sabu, Tasmaniac, and 911. A locker room where Cactus Jack doesn't seem out of place. A ring placed mere feet away from the first row of seats. A handicap match on every card, broken tables, and fans who never sit down from the opening bell. Fans who cheer when Santa Claus gets choke-slammed. Matches in which no one can tell the difference between fan favorites and rulebreakers, and no one cares. Joey Styles. An old bingo hall for a home building.

That's right, it can only be ECW.

"You go to the WWF or WCW if you want to make money," said former ECW champion Terry Funk. "You go to ECW if you want to wrestle, brawl, and bleed."

Fans sing a similar tune.

Want to see wrestling clowns, wrestlers coming back from the dead, rappers, and little kids with red and yellow headbands? Then the WWF and WCW are your kinds of federations.

Want to see two grown men tearing into each other, bones breaking, bottles smashing, and skin tearing? Feel like hanging out in an arena where the fans smell like beer and smoke, where they scream their brains out and call for more blood? Want to watch a federation where the champions are more like hunted dogs than leaders of their packs?

It can only be ECW.

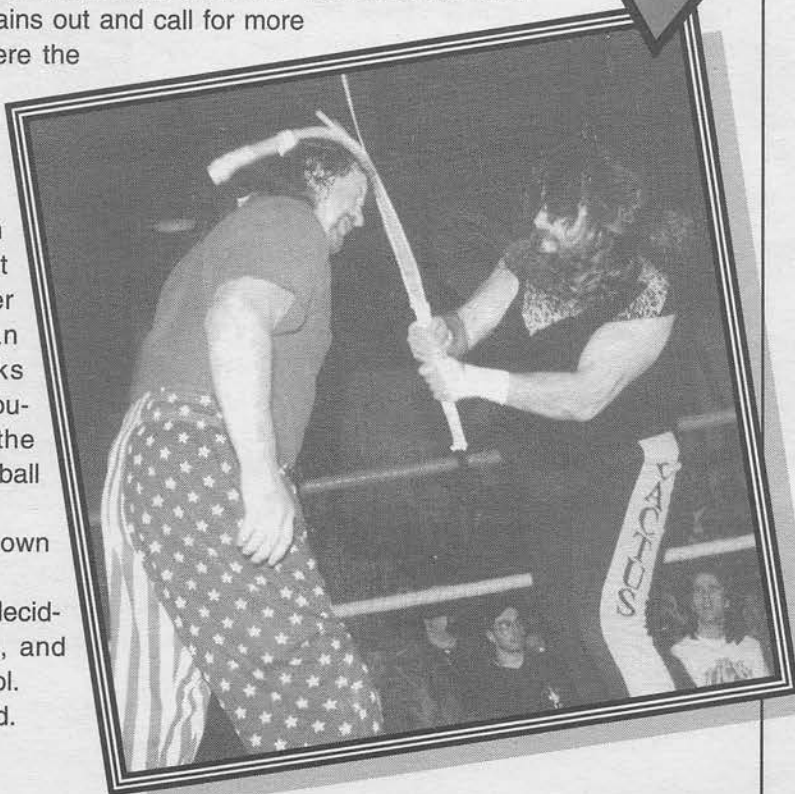
It's the federation with a bad attitude. Where winners beat the losers with Singapore canes and the losers shout out, "Please sir, I want another," rather than kiss the feet of a pretty woman named Woman. Where Sabu breaks tables with his moonsaults. Where a couple of brothers named Rotten make the Hart and Sullivan feuds look like a softball game at the family picnic.

ECW is the only federation with its own arena. The place is a dump.

But Vince McMahon is the guy who decided wrestling had to be glitzy, colorful, and shiny. Vince McMahon is definitely uncool.

ECW wrestling comes in shades of red. Please, sir, I want another.

Attitude



COOLEST MANEUVER: POWER BOMB

Big Van Vader knows that wrestling doesn't award points for style. He figured it out at an early age, when he realized his body was built for one thing: hand-to-hand combat. And when Vader went looking for a move that would make the most of his size, strength, and killer instinct, he had no trouble settling upon the power bomb.

Quick and decisive, awesome and overwhelming, damaging and potentially crippling, the power bomb is impressive in its simplicity. No special skills are required, merely the ability to lift a 240-pound opponent to shoulder height and drive him shoulder and neck first into whatever surface lies below. Ring or arena floor. Soft mat or concrete base.

Vader used it to nearly cripple Cactus Jack, disable Ron Simmons, and slow down Sting. He nearly wiped out "Hulkamania" with one thunderous power bomb at Clash of the Champions XXX.

Diesel used it to win the WWF World championship ... *in eight seconds.*

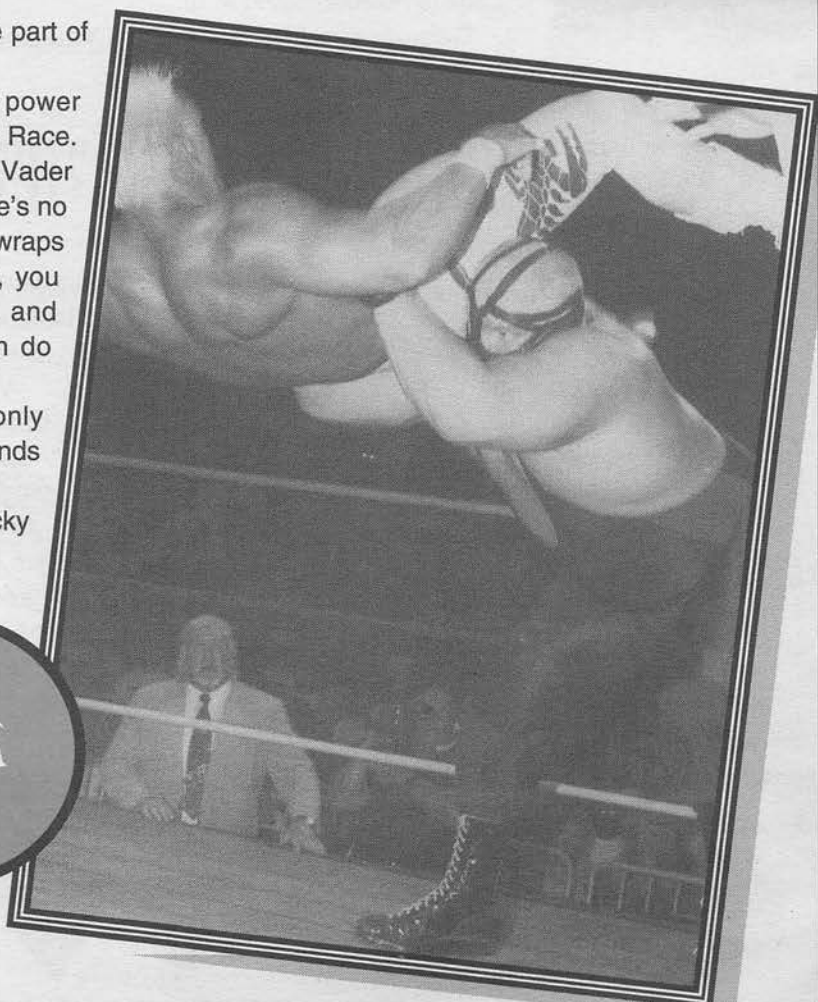
Just like every aerial and under-250-pound wrestler has worked on a moonsault, expect every strong man in wrestling to adopt the power bomb over the coming years.

It's not just cool. It's a must-have part of any power repertoire.

"I agree that the beauty of the power bomb is its simplicity," said Harley Race. "It's effective, it's devastating, and Vader can use it any time he wishes. There's no getting away from it. Once Vader wraps those big paws around your body, you know the power bomb is coming, and there's not a damn thing you can do about it."

Point of impact becomes the only thing on the victim's mind. If he lands on his spine, paralysis is possible.

Cactus Jack was one of the lucky ones. He forgot what happened.



COOLEST RING ENTRANCE: THE UNDERTAKER

The arena darkens, and a chill comes over the fans, especially those sitting in the upper reaches, where it's darkest. A pipe organ plays music that sounds like it belongs in a funeral parlor, which it does. Smoke billows out of the runway leading to the ring. Suddenly, a dark figure with his hair hanging over his face emerges. He is so big and square that he seems to be made of stone. His pale face stands out in the darkness.

The Undertaker has arrived.

Years ago, wrestling fans attended cards at Madison Square Garden merely to hear the crowd's reaction when Hulk Hogan made his entrance. Ric Flair's procession to the strains of the theme from *2001: A Space Odyssey* is a wrestling classic. If you've never seen and heard it, you should have.

In the mid-1990s, death's arrival makes the night. An appearance by The Undertaker can make your blood run cold.

And with each step, as he slowly makes his way to the ring, The Undertaker adds to his frightening aura.

Darkness is in the building. You have entered the afterworld. Let The Undertaker be your tour guide.

GHOULEST INTERVIEW: PAUL BEARER

Before funeral parlor owners started sounding liked used car salesmen, they sounded like Paul Bearer.

Who has a creepier voice than Mr. Bearer? Who else could get you thinking that maybe The Undertaker really is the living dead?

Often imitated, never copied, Bearer's voice is enough to shake anyone up. Hey, it shakes us up. He sounds like Katherine Hepburn with an attitude. Make that Katherine Hepburn meets Bette Davis meets Jason, the hideous masked killer in *Friday The 13th*.

Creepier



WRESTLING COOL!!!

COOLEST PAY-PER-VIEW: THE ROYAL RUMBLE

The WWF stumbled upon the Royal Rumble. Back in 1989, the federation's marketing experts went looking for a way to fill the only Sunday between early-September and the Super Bowl that didn't have an NFL game: the week between the conference championships and the Super Bowl.

The Royal Rumble was the WWF's answer to Super Bowl hype, and quite an answer it was.

On January 15, 1989, Big John Studd won the first Royal Rumble by outlasting "Million-Dollar Marathon Man" Ted DiBiase. It was the start of something special.

Since then, the Royal Rumble has been the one pay-per-view event wrestling fans could depend upon to deliver action and value for their entertainment dollar. The undercard is rarely special, although past Royal Rumble cards have seen Sgt. Slaughter win the WWF World title and Roddy Piper win the Intercontinental title. It's the main event that makes this card.

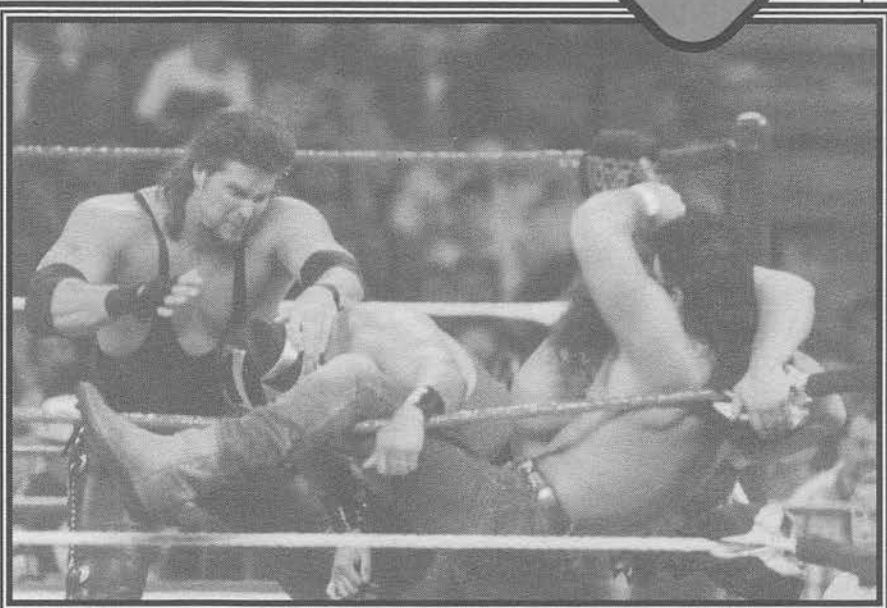
The Royal Rumble revived the outdated, overused battle royal. The original concept was unique. The match begins with two wrestlers. Then, every two minutes for the next 60 minutes, a new wrestler enters the ring. A blind draw determines the order of entrance, and when a wrestler enters pretty much determines whether he has any chance of winning.

DiBiase, Bret Hart, Bob Backlund, Ric Flair, and Shawn Michaels have all shown off their stamina in the Royal Rumble. Flair won the WWF World title in the 1992 event, last eliminating Sid Justice. In 1993, Hart and

Lex Luger hit the floor at exactly the same time for the Rumble's only tie. In recent years, the Royal Rumble has determined who would face the World champion at WrestleMania. For many WWF undercardlings, the Royal Rumble is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to earn a World title shot.

Non-stop action, drama, and intensity make the Royal Rumble the best \$24.95 you'll ever spend on TV.

Unique



WRESTLING COOL!!!

COOLEST BROADCASTER: JOEY STYLES

Uncool: "Gorilla, this is undoubtedly the greatest wrestling card I have ever had the privilege to witness. This match we're seeing here could unquestionably be a main event in any arena in the country."

Cool: "We're here in Orlando, but we've been banned from Disney World because there's no goofy wrestling in ECW."

Uncool: "What a minute! What's going on here?"

Cool: Referring to one of the Pit Bulls' arms: "That arm is as thick as the heads at CNN Center, but worth a lot more."

Uncool: "Give me a break, Bockwinkel."

Cool: On Tuesday night get-togethers in a Marietta, Georgia, bar, where the patrons watch ECW on satellite TV: "People in the Atlanta area can finally enjoy some innovative, hardcore-style wrestling."

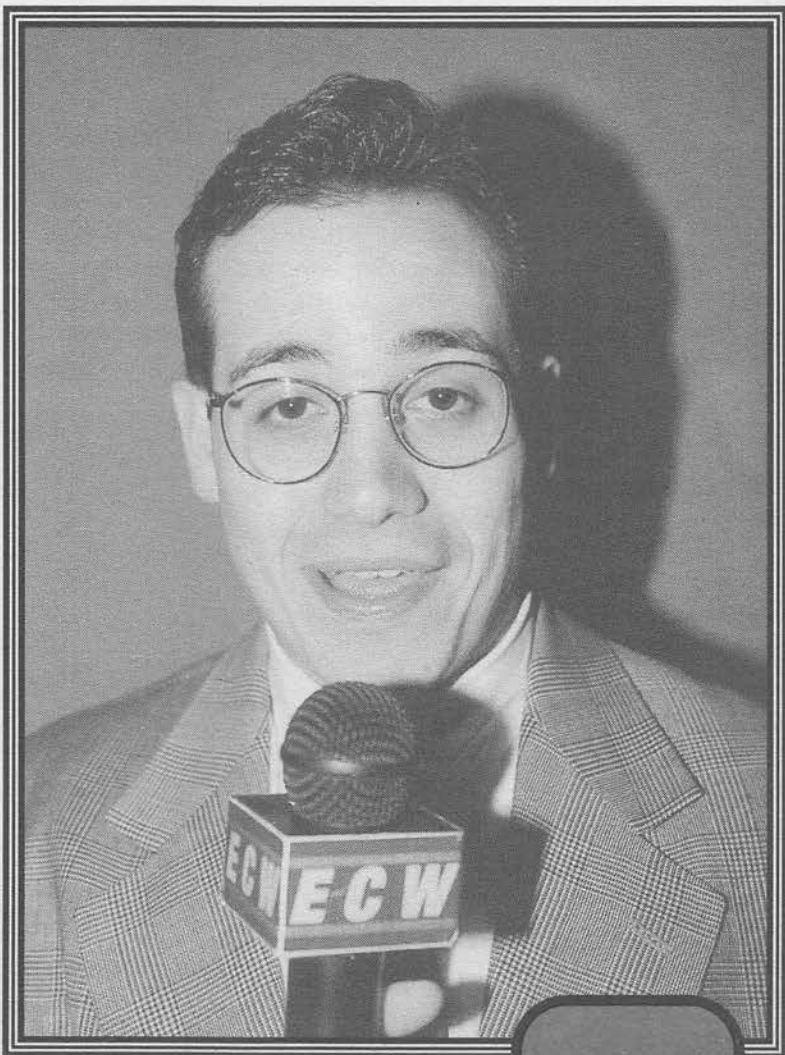
Uncool: "Alex Wright vs. Jean-Paul LeVeque is a great opening match for Starrcade '94."

Cool: On Al Snow vs. Chris Benoit: "I've seen more wrestling in five minutes than I've seen on pay-per-view in five years."

Uncool: Practically every WWF and WCW announcer.

Cool: ECW announcer Joey Styles, who calls 'em like he sees 'em with a lot of humor and honesty and a dash of ECW cool.

For us, it's either Joey or the mute button.



WRESTLING COOL!!!

COOLEST WRESTLING MAGAZINE: *WRESTLING BAD GUYS*

"CRAVINGS OF A CRIPPLER: 'MY NIGHT OF PERFECT SADISM,' BY BIG VAN VADER"

"IF YOU KNEW WHAT WE KNEW, YOU'D HATE BRET HART, TOO!"

"STAND UP AND FIGHT, YOU WIMP! HEY, 'HULKSTER,' STOP DUCKING HONKY TONK MAN!"

Ivan Koloff was inducted into the Rulebreaking Hall of Fame.

Bobby "The Brain" Heenan was given a forum to explain his wayward ways.

And Donna Garcia-Fromme brought readers up-to-date on the latest wrestling gossip.

You got all this if you bought the Winter 1994 edition of *Wrestling Bad Guys*, the magazine that's to *Inside Wrestling* and *Pro Wrestling Illustrated* what *American Spectator* is to *Time*.

Wrestling Bad Guys is not where to go if you want to read the company line: You know, all fan favorites are good, and all rulebreakers are bad.

In *Bad Guys*, most rulebreakers are good, and all fan favorites are despicable. Bret Hart vs. Bob Backlund makes the editors sick, and Hulk Hogan is the public enemy number one.

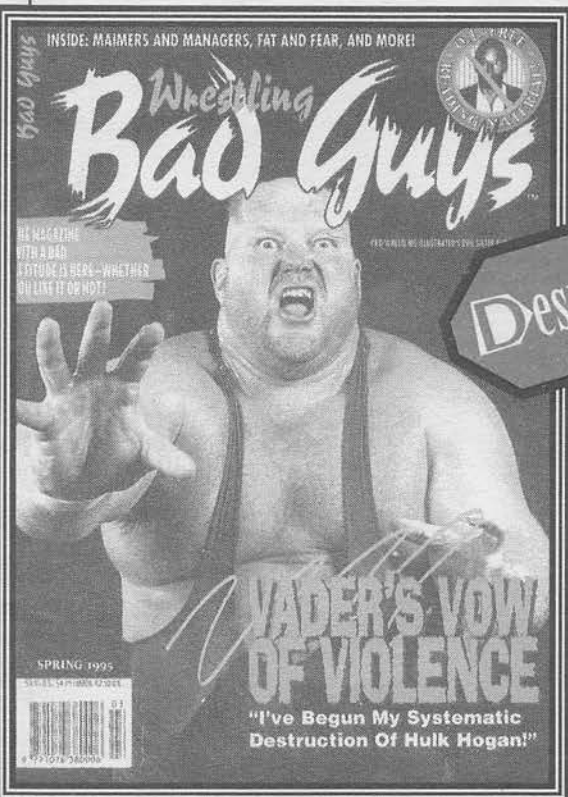
It's the magazine with a bad attitude ... whether you like it or not.

"The coolest thing about *Wrestling Bad Guys* is that nimrods like Stu Saks and Craig Peters actually allowed it to happen," said Eddie Ellner, whose title in the magazine is listed as Editorial Conscience. "It just goes to show you that money talks, although Bill Apter did everything in his power, which is to say not much, to keep the magazine from being resurrected. The only drawback was that we had to give him his own column, 'Balancing Act,' but that has actually worked to our advantage by allowing our readers to see how the mind of the average wrestling idiot works."

Wrestling Bad Guys, the devil's advocate of wrestling magazines, defends those who never asked to be defended and criticizes those who are rarely criticized.

"It's the only magazine I read," said Stan Hansen, a *Bad Guys* favorite. "Everything else is toilet paper."

You don't have to like it. You don't have to agree with what is printed in it. You do have to acknowledge that it's cool.



Despicable

COOLEST HAIR: BULL NAKANO

Bull Nakano's hair looks like a cross between a porcupine, Yul Brynner, and the NBC peacock.

If that seems like a strange idea of cool, consider that Hulk Hogan is nearly bald, Diesel goes traditional, Sting's cut is on every high school kid in America, and Big Van Vader doesn't have much at all. Woman goes for the white-trash brothel look, and Alundra Blayze is a bleached blonde.

Spiked and colorful, Bull Nakano at least tries to set herself apart from the rest. Her hairstyle reflects her personality: pointed, erratic, and twisted.

Hey, you won't find it on *MTV Style*, but it's better than the norm.

Porcupine



WRESTLING COOL!!!

COOLEST CRIPPLER: BIG VAN VADER

The most alarming aspect of Big Van Vader is that he doesn't seem to care.

"He has absolutely no respect for his opponents," said Sting, often a victim of Vader's brutality. "None at all. You know, he's the kind of person who would kill if it was legal. He's just that bad. Just look in his eyes if you ever get the chance. There's nothing there. It's just hollow, like looking into the eyes of a wild animal. I don't know what happened to him in his childhood, but he obviously lost all feeling."

Thanks for the compliment, Vader says.

"Don't anybody dare tell me that there's something wrong with what I do," Vader said. "This is a wrestling, not the Ice Capades, and if you can't take it, just run away and hide. When you deal with me, you're dealing with the Devil, and if you try to take something from me, I'm going to take something from you, and it could be your life."

After nearly paralyzing Cactus Jack, Vader calmly walked back to the dressing room and later went out for a quiet evening. The subject of Jack's condition never came up, according to manager Harley Race.

Vader was ready to power bomb Hulk Hogan a few more times before the "Hulkster" amazingly rose from the near dead. Remember back at SuperBrawl IV, when Vader handcuffed The Guardian Angel to the steel cage?

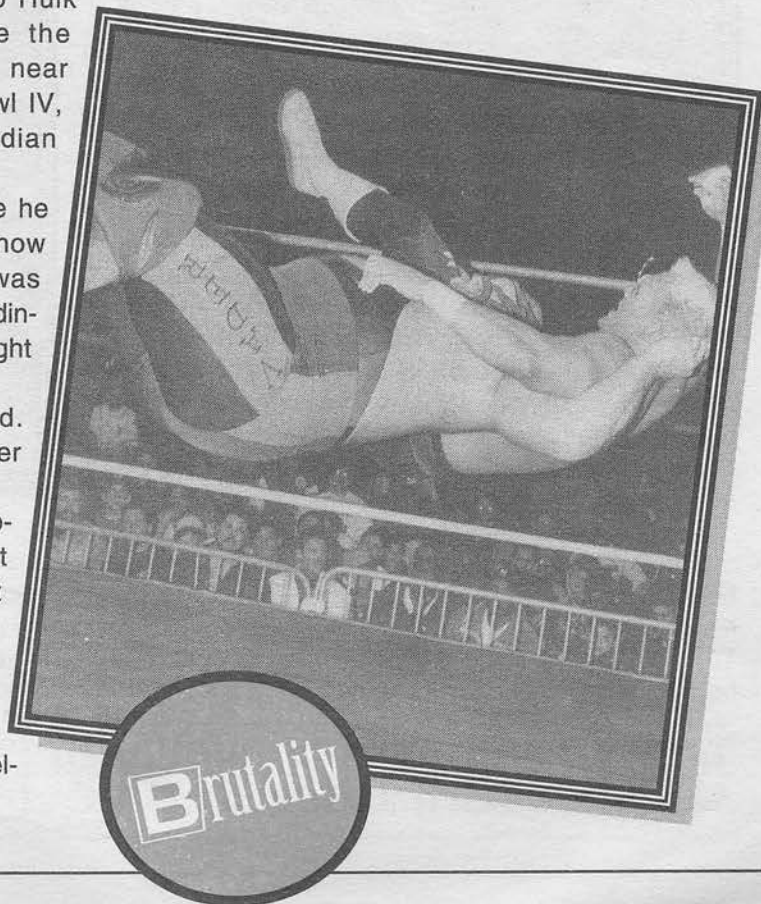
"He thought he had me just where he wanted me," said Guardian Angel, now known as Big Bubba Rogers. "He was going to slice me up and eat me for dinner. Fortunately, I got away and taught him a lesson with my nightstick."

Vader is ruthless and calculated. Worst of all for opponents, he's super strong.

"When that adrenaline starts pumping, there's nobody in the world that can stop him," Race said. "Know what the best part is? Nobody knows when the adrenaline starts pumping. You never know."

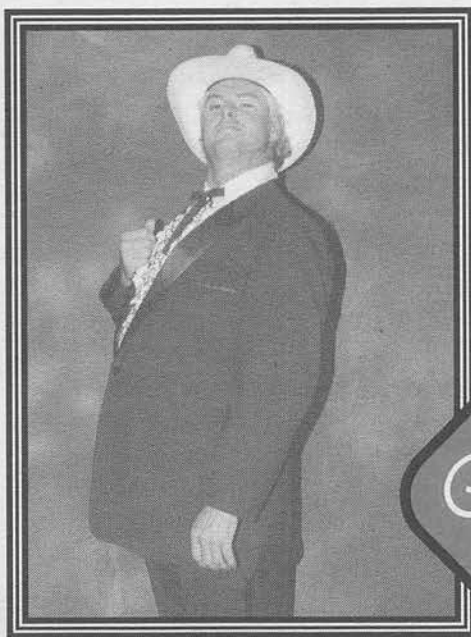
Until it's too late.

Brutal, merciless, callous, and unfeeling, but also cool.



WRESTLING COOL!!!

COOLEST MANAGER: COL. ROBERT PARKER



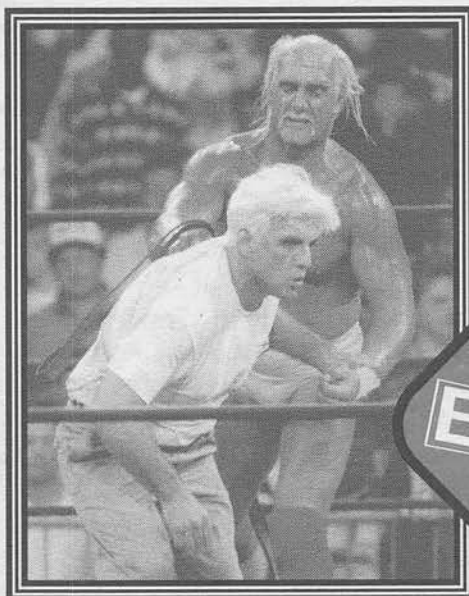
Guts

The first thing most people think when they see Col. Robert Parker is ... "Will that be extra crispy, or original recipe?"

Now, you might be thinking, how can we call anyone who inspires chants of "KFC! KFC!" cool.

It's simple: Anyone with the guts to walk around wearing a tall hat, a confederate soldier's outfit, and smoking a long cigar must be pretty comfortable with himself.

Col. Parker is so goofy and tacky that he's almost cool—certainly a helluva lot cooler than redneck Harley Race and Japanese World War II veteran Mr. Fuji.



Bogus

WCW's attempt at copying ECW came to us as WCW Uncensored on March 19, 1995, in Tupelo, Mississippi. The card had five specialty matches: Hacksaw Duggan vs. Meng in a martial arts bout; Dustin Rhodes vs. Blacktop Bully in a "King Of The Road" match in the back of a tractor trailer; Arn Anderson vs. Johnny B. Badd in a wrestler vs. boxer match; Harlem Heat vs. The Nasty Boys with Texas Tornado rules; and Hulk Hogan vs. Big Van Vader in a strap match.

Very cool idea, but very uncool execution of cool idea.

The Duggan-Meng match was a joke. The Rhodes-Bully match might have been cool ... if WCW hadn't edited out all the bloody, ultraviolent parts. And the Anderson-Badd and Heat-Nastys matches were more comical than anything. Cotton candy was one of the "weapons" used in the "Texas Tornado" match. The strap match had the most potential, but Hogan was declared the winner after he dragged *Ric Flair* to all four corners of the ring. Uncensored was pretty uncool.

COOLEST NEW IDEA: WCW UNCENSORED

ON THE OTHER HAND . . .

WRESTLING COOL!!!

DEFINITELY NOT COOL: ALEX WRIGHT

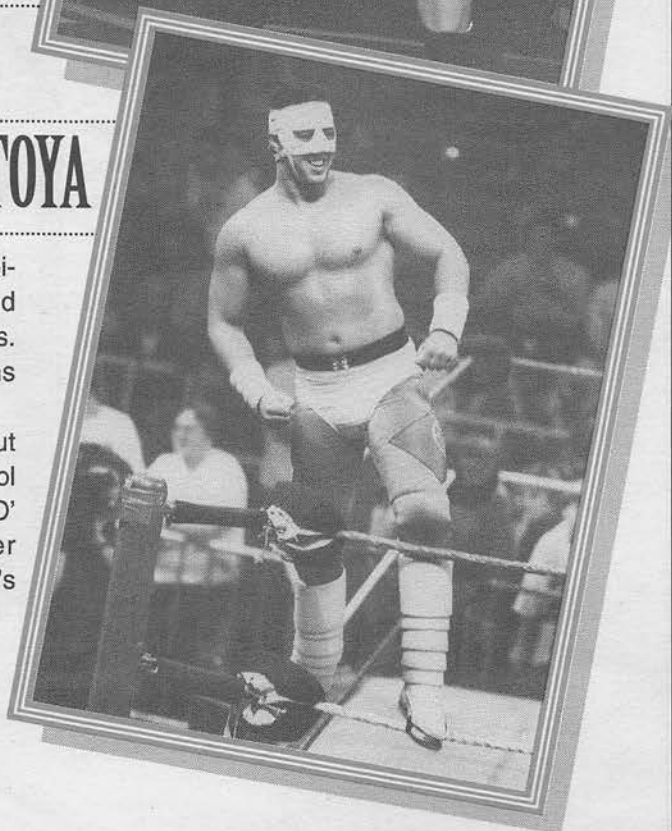
Even after having watched the routine countless times, we can't help but break out with laughter every time Alex Wright jumps into his disco-duck dance. Young Alex will obviously do anything on a dare. He doesn't mind making a complete idiot out of himself wherever he goes.

"Das Wunderkind" is "Das Fool," and if we had our way, we'd give him and his dance "Das Boot."

DEFINITELY NOT COOL: "MAN O' WAR" ALDO MONTOYA

Men of War are ugly, slimy, and deliver a poisonous sting. But they're dead out of water and preyed upon by the bigger creatures in the seas. Men of War are only dangerous when humans have their backs turned.

The term Man of War might sound cool, but when you get right down to it, there's nothing cool about it. And there's nothing cool about "Man O' War" Aldo Montoya. He looks like a Power Ranger in a silly yellow outfit. Sorry, Aldo, that's not a compliment.

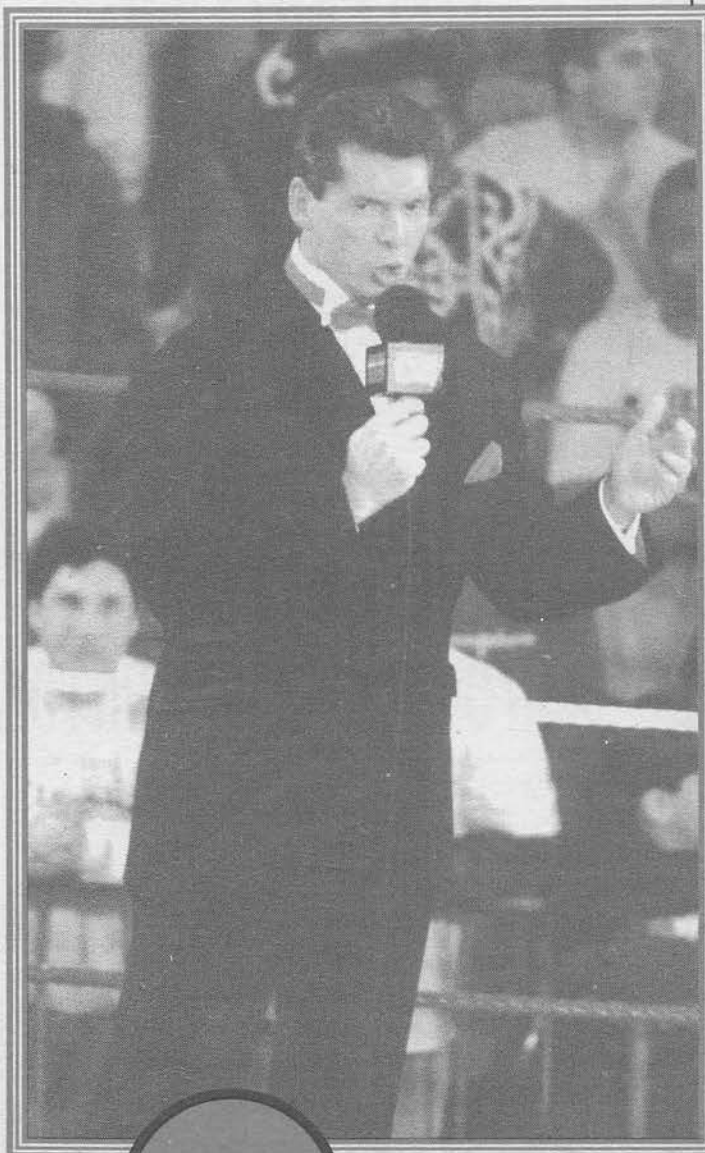


DEFINITELY NOT COOL: VINCE McMAHON

In the early-1970s, when his father, the late, great Vince McMahon Sr., ran the WWF, Vince McMahon Jr. was an up-and-coming announcer with a great voice, an exciting blow-by-blow style, and a willingness to ask the tough questions.

After his father died, Vince Jr. turned the WWF into a circus. He invented rock 'n' wrestling, made Hulk Hogan a come-to-life cartoon superhero, and emphasized substance over style. Watching a live arena card became a painful experience, but it wasn't half as bad as listening to Vince on TV.

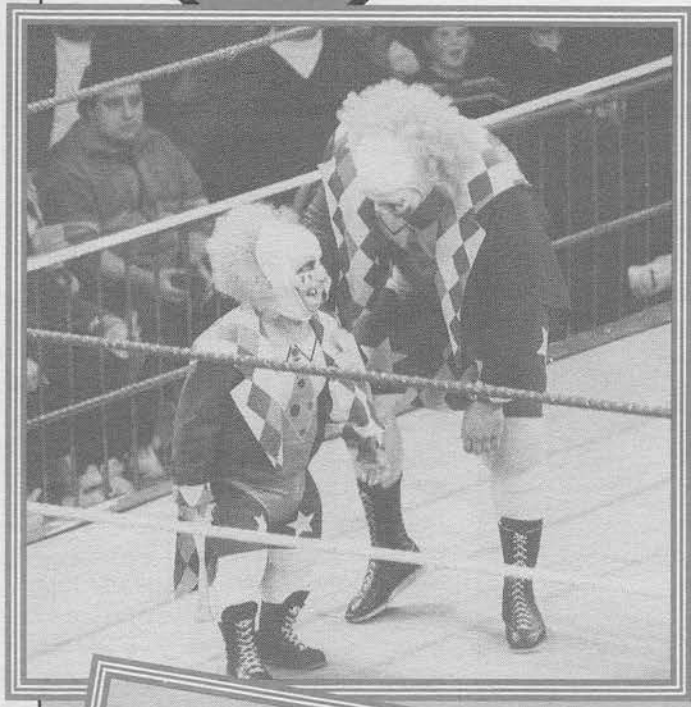
Vince remained behind the microphone, but he sounds more like a circus barker than an unbiased announcer. He is, undoubtedly, the worst and most uncool announcer in wrestling today. Listening to his voice for more than a minute is unbearable. How about for 60 minutes? *Monday Night Raw* needs a couple of cool announcers, like Joey Styles and Jesse Ventura.



Annoying

WRESTLING COOL!!!

Absurd



DEFINITELY NOT COOL: DOINK AND DINK

Doink is the full-blown clown. Dink is the midget clown. They run around in their clown uniforms coming up with unfunny stunts and attacking opponents from behind. On one memorable evening, Bam Bam Bigelow bodyslammed Dink the Clown.

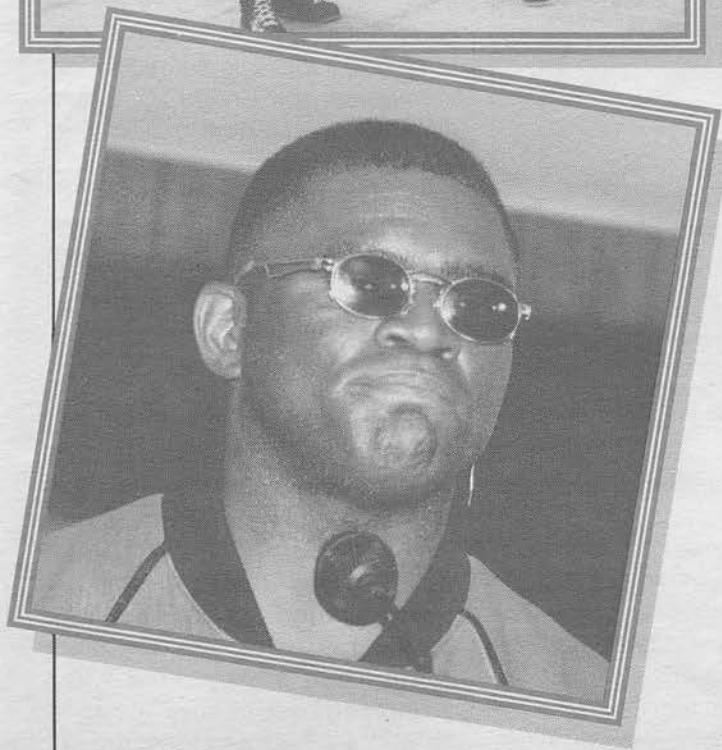
Clowns belong in the circus, not the wrestling ring. Go home, Doink and Dink.

DEFINITELY NOT COOL: TNT

Former NFL standout Lawrence Taylor was a color commentator on TNT's Sunday night broadcasts of NFL games. In February, Taylor signed a one-time contract (for anywhere between \$150,000 and \$500,000, depending on whom you believe) to wrestle Bam Bam Bigelow at WrestleMania XI. TNT, like WCW, is owned by Ted Turner. The WWF is WCW's only serious rival in North America. In March, TNT relieved Taylor of his broadcast duties and had the nerve to say his dismissal had nothing to do with his joining the WWF.

"The timing was totally coincidental," the spokesman said.

Yeah, right. Nit-picking is uncool. □



DAN SEVERN

"I'LL MAKE PEOPLE RESPECT THE NWA AGAIN!"

ON FEBRUARY 24, 1995, the small crowd at Peel's Palace in Erlanger, Kentucky, was told by broadcaster Les Thatcher that Dan Severn had

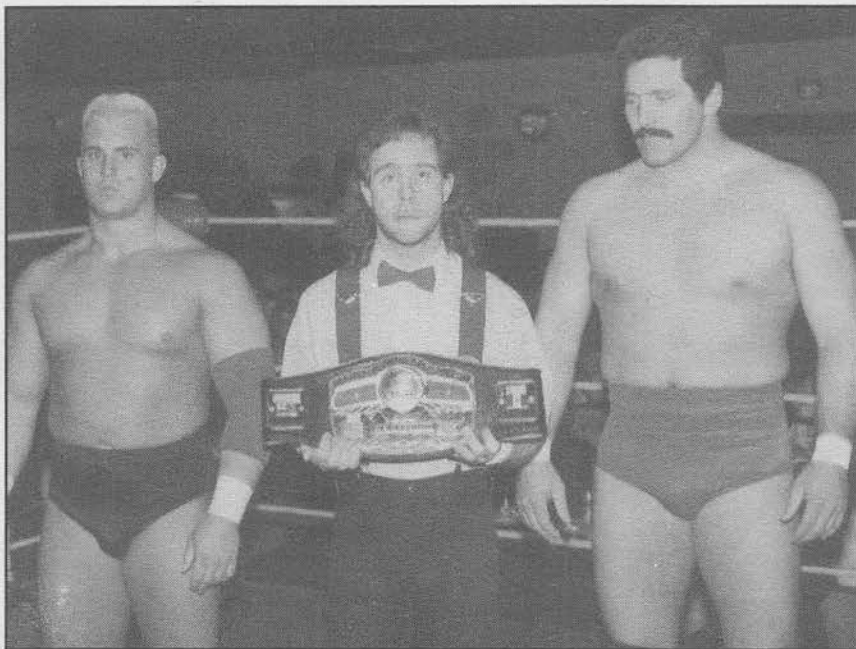
alternate in Greco-Roman wrestling. Severn blends Greco-Roman and freestyle wrestling with the martial arts of sambo and judo, and proclaims that nobody

holds, finished in second place at UFC IV.

The crowd at Peel's Palace had no idea they'd see a little UFC-style action on February 24. But in the second match of the evening, Severn's interference led to Boo Bradley's victory over Chris Candido in a "loser-must-eat-dog-food" match. Candido, who does not like eating dog food, was incensed at Severn and offered to defend his NWA title against him later that evening. Severn agreed under one condition: The match had to be held under UFC rules.

Candido foolishly agreed to the stipulation and ended up losing his NWA title to Severn, who beat him with an armbar submission hold.

Senior Editor Bill Apter caught up with Severn after the title victory. "Dan says he wants to be the new standard," Apter reported. "I hope it catches on."



Referee Mark Curtis holds up the NWA belt before the Dan Severn-Chris Candido match. Severn was only offered the match after he interfered in Candido's earlier bout against Boo Bradley.

come from Michigan to watch the Smoky Mountain card. The news didn't mean much to most of the fans.

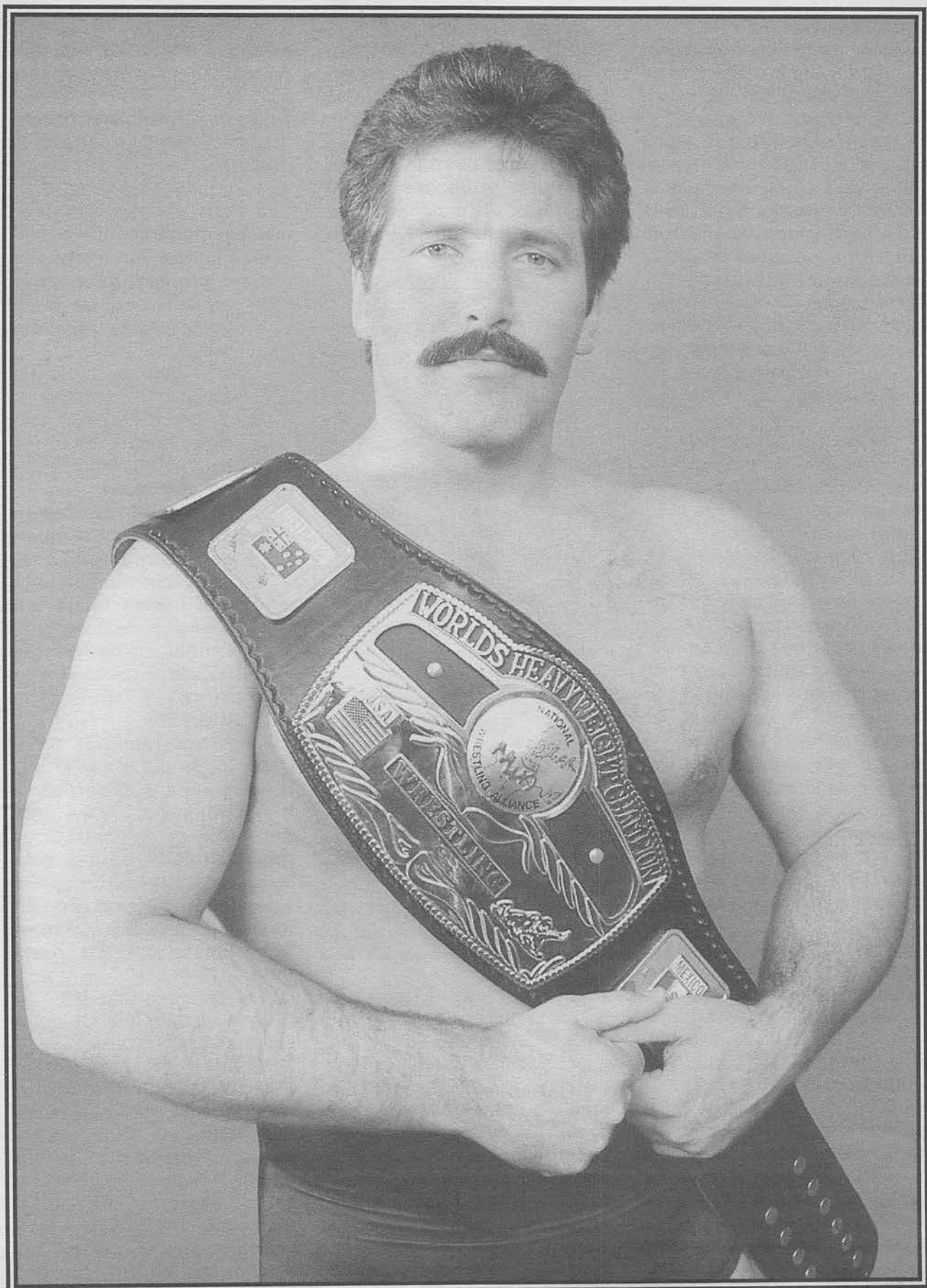
Severn, 34, from Coldwater, Michigan, has wrestled in the NWA, Smoky Mountain, Midwest Territorial, and in Japan. He has also won more than 70 amateur titles and is a two-time Olympic

can match his "blend of back-ground."

Over the past few years, Severn has branched out into the newest form of fighting arts: The Ultimate Fighting Championship, in which competitors from all walks of man-to-man combat compete under submission-only rules. Severn, a master of submission

Q: When you arrived in Erlanger, Kentucky, that night, did you ...

A: Did I ever expect to leave as the NWA heavyweight champion? No way. Hey, I'd come down at Les Thatcher's invitation to watch some wrestling and just enjoy myself. The last thing I had on my mind was wrestling, especially for the title. You can ask anyone: I didn't even have my tights



with me. I had to borrow a pair.

Q: Borrow a pair? Dan, excuse me for saying so, but that sounds a little strange.

A: Yeah, I know, but it wasn't as bad as it sounds. One of the wrestlers had a new pair of tights that he had never used, so I just bought them from him. Believe me, I wouldn't wear somebody else's sweaty tights.

Q: Actually, it kind of surprises me that you wouldn't have an extra pair of tights in your luggage. You know, just in case.

A: Well, I did have a pair of tights with me, but they were in my duffel bag, which was back in my hotel room, and I didn't have time to drive all the way back there. Hey, I'll be the first to admit it: I'm very fortunate to be NWA champion, but just because I got a little lucky doesn't mean I'm going to be any less serious about the job at hand. I want to be the new standard for wrestlers, wrestling, and champions everywhere. This was a major step for me. I remember watching NWA matches when I was a kid. I'll make people respect the NWA again!

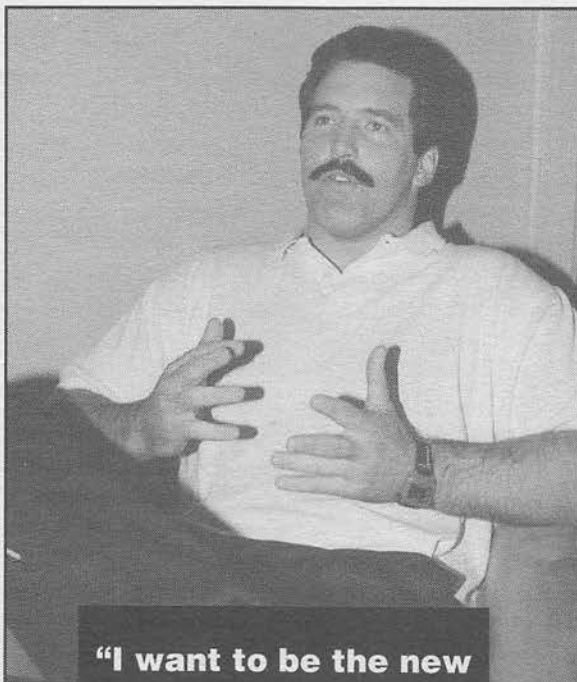
Q: And, of course, Candido is one of the most respected young wrestlers in the sport.

A: I respect him, and it showed a lot of guts on his part to one, offer me the match, and two, agree to it under UFC rules.

Q: What if Candido said no to the second stipulation? Would you have wrestled him under normal rules?

A: Yeah, I guess so. Probably. In a way, I was just trying to see what I could get away with. I knew Candido was mad at me for what happened in the

Boo Bradley match, so I figured he'd do anything to get his hands on me. Maybe next time he'll be a little less careless with a title, but I really think it came down to his professional pride. He felt he could beat me under any conditions, and he wasn't going to back down.



"I want to be the new standard for wrestlers, wrestling, and champions everywhere ... I'm not willing to settle for second-best at anything"

Q: But that wasn't true. You dominated the match.

A: Sure, I was in control, but anybody who's watched a UFC match knows that it's often the man who plays possum who ends up winning, simply because he hasn't expended much energy. I was concerned because I tried a lot of holds on Candido, but none of them worked. He kept on getting to the ropes, which indicated to me that he had a lot of deter-

mination, drive, and strength. He was no dead duck by any means.

Q: It's true, isn't it, that 10 minutes is a long time for a UFC match.

A: Very long, especially when you consider that amateur matches don't last more than eight minutes. Ten minutes is a long time to be going all-out, and we were going all-out ... at least I was.

Q: I think anybody who saw that match saw a lot of determination in your eyes. You're one of the hardest working athletes I've ever seen.

A: Thank you, Bill. That's about the greatest compliment anybody could ever give me. I want to be the best at everything I do. I'm not willing to settle for second-best at anything. I think the Ultimate Fighting Championships have made me a better all-around wrestler, and I

don't think there's a single person in amateur, UFC, or professional wrestling who has my background. I love wrestling in every shape and form, and I love to experiment at various styles. It's a real thrill.

Q: I understand that Al Snow trained you for the Ultimate Fighting Championships.

A: That's right. Al's quite a guy, although I'm not sure what's come over him these days with that "Simply Sensational" bit of his here in Smoky Mountain. Maybe Al's a little frustrated. Maybe he thinks it's time he was a little selfish ... time to look out for number one, so to speak. But he sure didn't seem that way

to me at the last UFC. He was willing to sacrifice everything to help me—he was completely *unselfish*—so I'm a little surprised by his behavior these days. I don't know, and I really can't speak for him. That wouldn't be right. I owe the guy a lot. He has a right to wrestle the way he wants to. I don't have to like what he does, but I'll always respect the man.

Q: How does a man get involved in an event like that in the first place?

A: I gotta give my business manager, Phyllis Lee, credit for that. She has really helped my career over the years. She made a few phone calls to the UFC promoters and told them I was the kind of wrestler that would be great for the UFC. She eventually convinced

them, and I was in. I trained very hard for that event and came pretty close to winning it, as you know. I tell you, Bill, UFC is very intense. I was disappointed that I finished second. I want to be the best at everything I do. But I will win one of those—you can count on that.

Q: I also understand that you're going to try to qualify for the 1996 and 2000 Olympics. Do you see that getting in the way of your professional career, or can you balance both?

A: Actually, I'm trying to balance three things: pros, amateur, and UFC. I don't know what's going to happen. Wrestling in the Olympics is every wrestler's dream, and I don't want to give up until I make it. On the other hand, I'm 34 now, and I'll be close to 40 when the 2000 Olympics roll around, so this could be my last shot. Who knows? Right now, I'm seeing a lot of possibilities in the pro ranks that maybe I didn't see before, although I don't

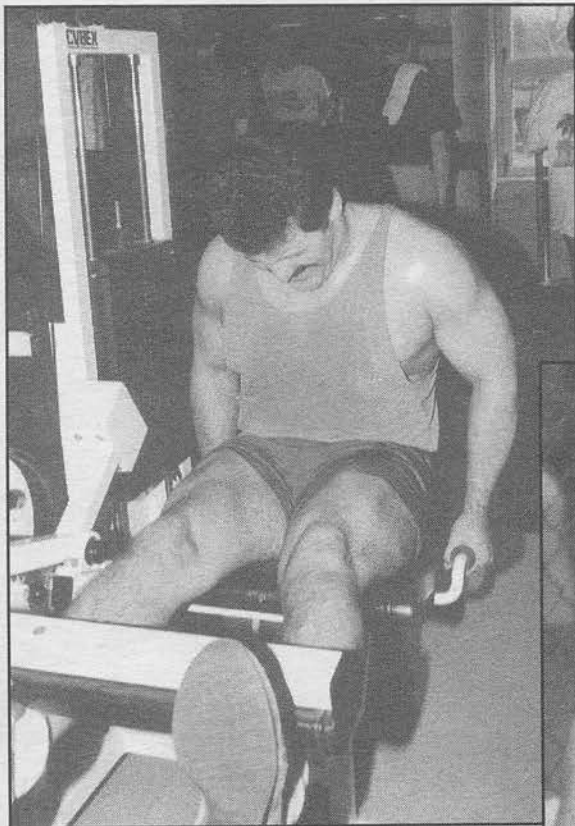
expect many wrestlers to agree to fight me under UFC rules. Hey, they don't have to. I'm perfectly comfortable under normal freestyle rules. I just see myself getting better and smarter in the ring with every match. That's what happens when you work as hard as I have.

Q: Are we about to see a champion who wins all of his matches by submission?

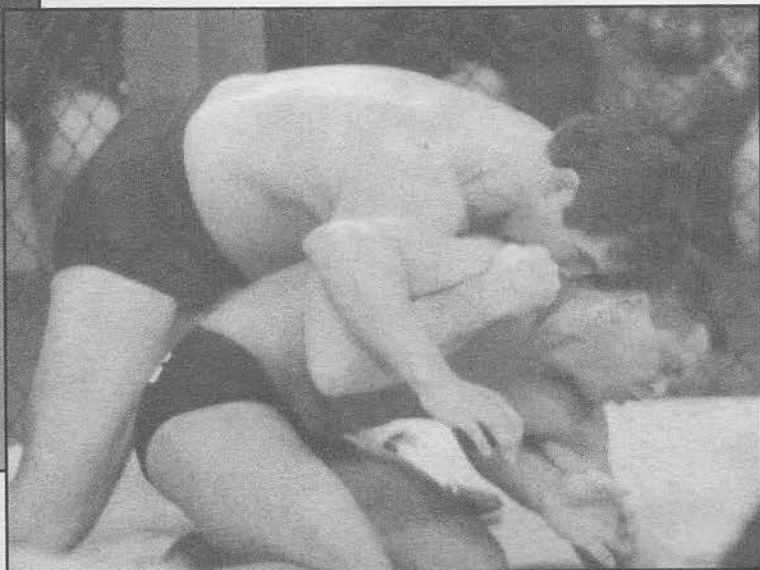
A: That would be all right by me. It's what I'm always shooting for. I don't go for the big moves or pins. I try to wear down my opponents, and that usually results in a submission. I can make guys submit to what looks like simple and basic moves. If a pin is easier, I go for it. But all submissions? That's okay, too. My reign is off to a good start. I've beaten guys like Osamu Nishimura and Benson Lee—two pretty tough guys. I'll take on anybody from any federation. I'm totally confident that I can defeat anyone in the world.

Q: Dan, it was a pleasure. Thank you for your time.

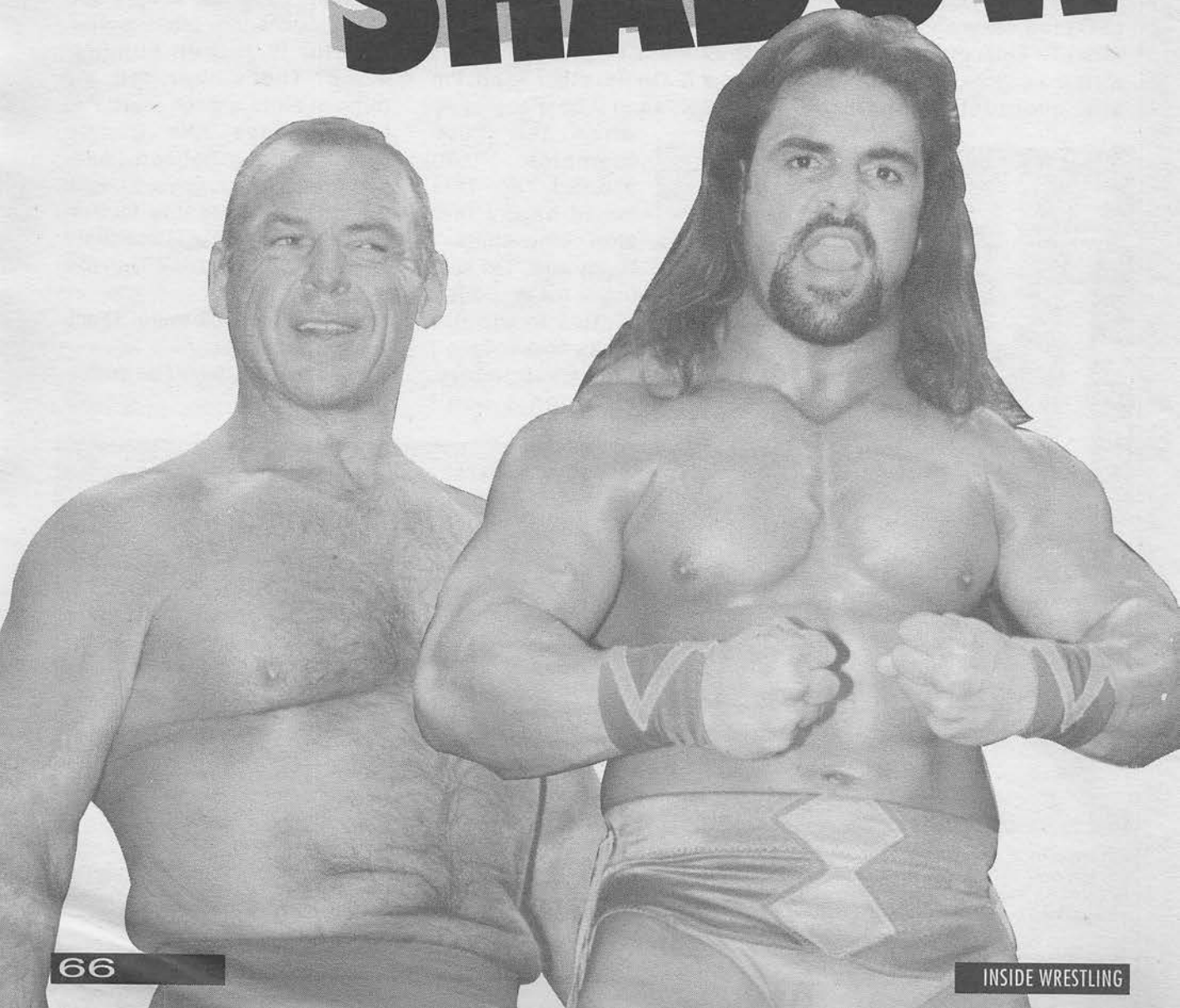
A: Thank you, Bill. The pleasure was mine. □



Severn's hard work in the gym (above) has paid off. Not only is he a fine wrestler, he also excelled in Ultimate Fighting Championships IV (right), a competition in which he finished second.



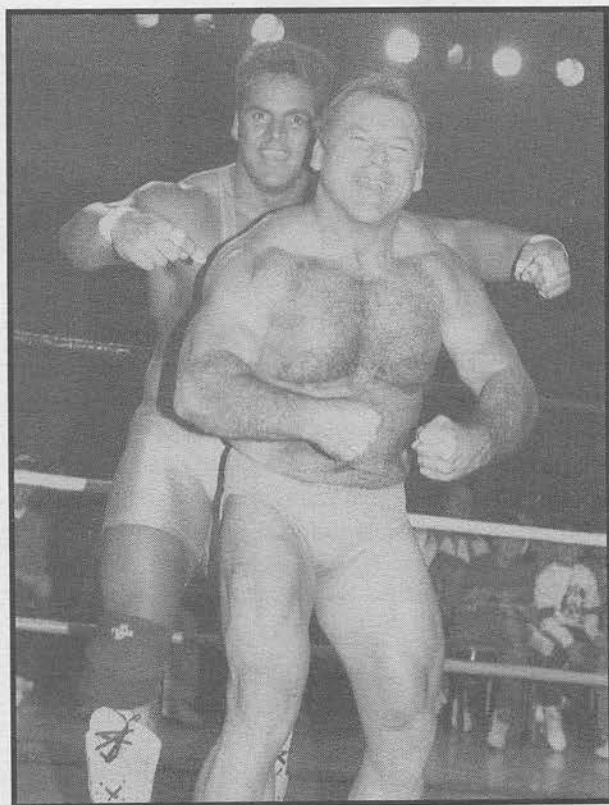
Ivan WRESTLING IN THE SHADOW



Putski:

OF ... HIS SON?!

"POLISH POWER" IVAN PUTSKI IS ONE OF THE MOST POPULAR MEN IN WRESTLING HISTORY. BUT HIS SON, SCOTT, IS FINALLY BEGINNING TO EMERGE AS THE STAR OF THE FAMILY



Only three years ago, it was Scott who was standing behind his famous father. Now Ivan Putski is gladly stepping aside to allow his son to step into the spotlight.

By Dave Rosenbaum

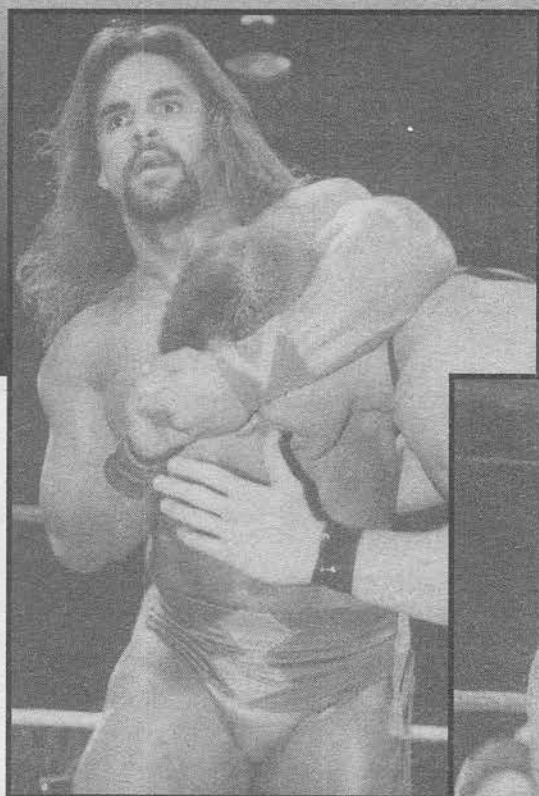
IVAN AND SCOTT Putski stepped out of the showers after a recent International Championship Wrestling card in Orwigsburg, Pennsylvania, and smiled when they saw the crowd of reporters surrounding their locker stalls. Several of the reporters turned and smiled back. The resemblance was that amusing. There was no doubt, judging from their compact, muscular physiques, that these two were father and son.

When they got back to their lockers, the Putskis simultaneously got dressed and started answering questions. Finally, after about 20 minutes, Scott turned to his father and said, "This never happened before, Dad."

To which Ivan replied: "I guess this means you've made it."

And Scott said: "So much for that second-generation jinx people talk so much about, huh?"

There has, indeed, been a second-generation jinx in wrestling. David Sammartino flopped in his father's shadow, Dustin Rhodes hasn't quite reached the level of stardom attained by Dusty, and Greg Gagne was good, but he was never Verne. Immense



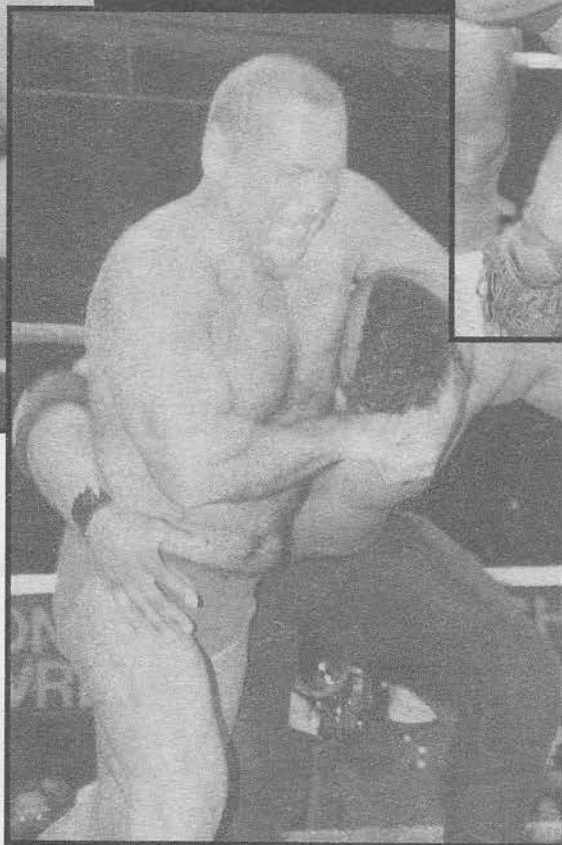
Ivan helped his son and Tony Atlas win a six-man match recently, but he only competes occasionally these days. He actually likes the fact that the fans sometimes cheer louder for Scott than they do for him.

Scott admits it was tough trying to live up to the standards of his father and establish his own identity. Now he's doing exceptionally well in International Championship Wrestling, and Dad couldn't be more proud.

pressure comes with trying to follow in the footsteps of a famous father, and there have been so many famous second-generation failures in other sports: Pete Rose Jr. and Dale Berra in baseball and most of the Howe family in hockey, for example.

For the longest time, it looked like Scott Putski would add his name to the long list of second-generation failures. Even he thought so.

"There was a long stretch there when my career was really lagging," Scott admitted. "Nothing was going right. I couldn't get a break, and any time I'd lose a match, people would start comparing me to my father. That was so tough, because I love my father, and there's nobody in the world I'd rather emulate, but I can't be him. I can't be 'Polish Power II.' I can only be my own



Scott went through a rough time recently. He really struggled in his attempts to put together a winning streak; that's now behind him, and he's making a bid to win the ICW title from Greg Valentine.

make it tougher for Scott," Ivan said. "The thing is, I couldn't just go away. I have a life, too, and I've always felt that a man has to work hard and make his own breaks. I think some-

man, and I hope that's good enough for all the fans out there."

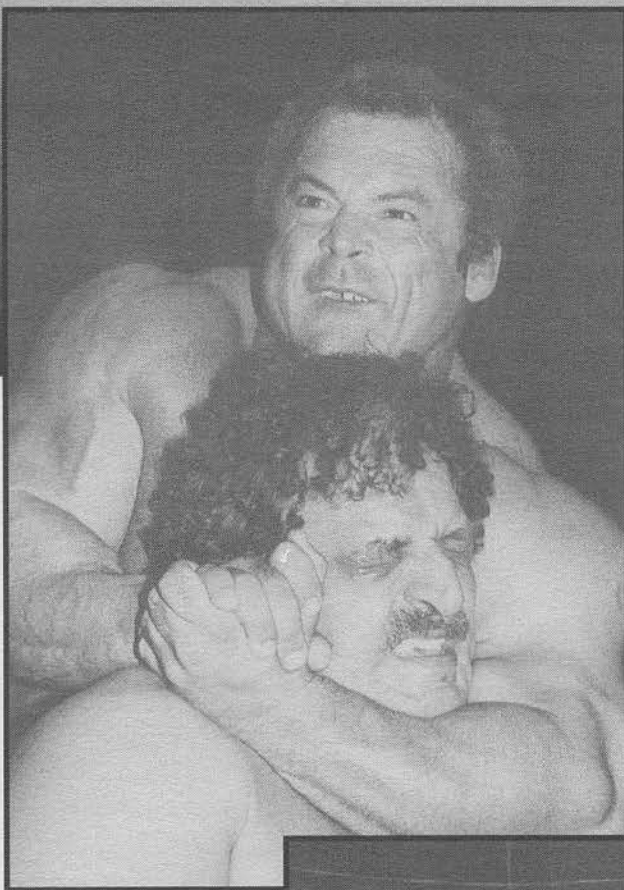
It didn't help Scott's case that Ivan never officially retired from wrestling, although his schedule has been greatly reduced over the past five or six years. Ivan was one of wrestling's original superheroes—it used to be widely acknowledged that he was the strongest man in wrestling—and fans loved him. On the rare occasions Ivan has wrestled recently, fans have packed the stands to watch him.

"I knew all along that as long as I remained active, it was going to

times Scott paid too much attention to me and the critics and not enough attention to himself.

"He's a great athlete, just like his old man, and he has the advantage of being a couple of inches taller. Scott's proving now that he can make it on his own. These days, when people say Putski, they're usually talking about Scott. It's a little strange, but I'm okay with it."

Ivan, who never won an individual world heavyweight title but shared the WWF World tag team title with Tito Santana in 1979, has had no trouble shrinking back into the shadows of his beloved son.



Like father (left), like son (below). Both Ivan and Scott Putski use a simple power attack in the ring. Scott learned a great deal from his dad, and he hopes his career lasts just as long.

But Ivan isn't blind to the facts. He looks around and sees what has become of the many men he feuded with during the early part of his career. Superstar Graham is long retired. Nick Bockwinkel is WCW commissioner. Bobby "The Brain" Heenan is a WCW commentator. Jesse Ventura has had careers in broadcasting, acting, and politics. Two of the three Valiants are long retired.

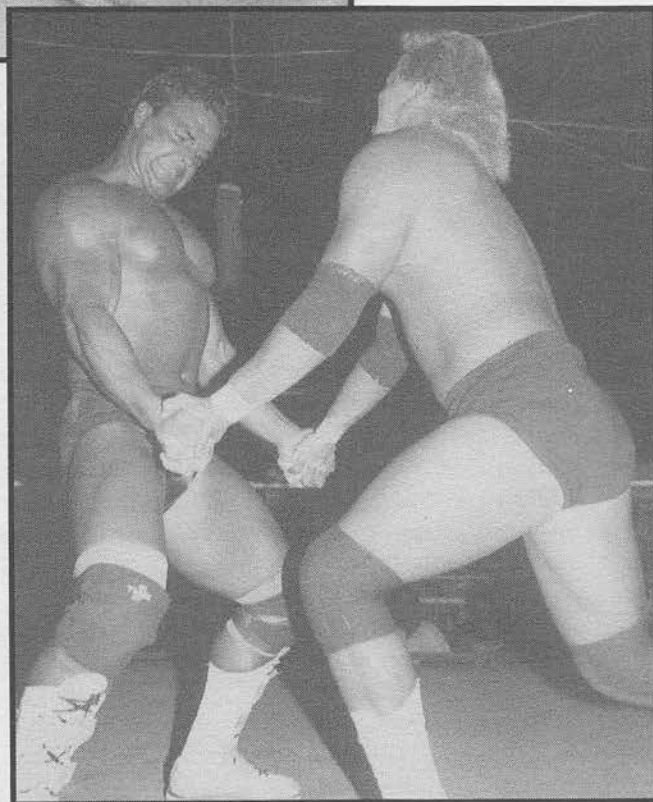
"Sometimes I feel like a relic around here," Ivan said. "Even Valentine's younger than me."

Scott laughs when he hears his father speaking that way.

"Dad's always been his own worst critic," he said. "Look at his physique. He can go pound-for-pound with me in any weightlifting contest, and I've seen bodybuilders half his age who don't look half as good as he does. I'll tell you something: It makes me feel good to see my father this way because it lets me know that I have a long career ahead. Longevity definitely runs in this family."

Scott hopes so. He knows he must make up for a lot of lost time and is a

long way from becoming a superstar. For now, there is only one future Hall of Famer in the Putski family. But the shadow he casts is getting shorter. □



Not that Ivan's comeback is in a supporting role. Ivan thinks he can do his share of damage in ICW, even if that only involves wrestling in an occasional tag team match.

Nor did he have any trouble agreeing to team with Scott and Tony Atlas in a six-man tag team match against Border Patrol and Greg Valentine on an ICW card.

Ivan wasn't surprised that his team won. Here's what did surprise him:

"The loudest cheers came when Scott tagged in. The fans actually seemed a little disappointed when Scott tagged out, too," Ivan said. "It was great to hear the fans take to him the way they did. Now there's only one next step, and that's beating Valentine for the ICW heavyweight belt. When that happens, people will really start to realize that Scott has arrived."

The telephone wires sizzle each month, as two top wrestlers voice their rage and hostility toward each other. Here's the unedited transcript of their conversation, your chance to feel the raw emotion that results when two antagonists face off ... **One On One**

HULK HOGAN AND Ric Flair are natural rivals. During the 1980s, Hogan dominated the WWF, while Flair dominated the NWA. But they never met in the ring. Finally, in the early-1990s, Hogan and Flair crossed paths in the WWF and wrestled each other at several arena cards; Hogan won most of the matches. Unfortunately for wrestling fans worldwide, the big pay-per-view encounter never happened.

More celebrated confrontations occurred when Hogan invaded WCW last summer. At the time, Flair was the WCW World champion, and Hogan wasted no time taking a run at the "Nature Boy." Hogan beat Flair for the belt at *Bash at the Beach* and defended it courageously, though Flair and his manager, Sherri Martel, tried desperately to run him out of wrestling and into any available hospital.

The Flair-Hogan war apparently ended on October 24, 1994, when the two met in the main event of *Halloween Havoc*. It was a "loser-must-retain" steel cage match, and Hogan again overcame interference by Martel to pin Flair ... and force this living legend out of the sport forever. Or so it seemed.

After a few months on the sidelines, Flair purchased a ringside seat for *SuperBrawl V*. He interfered in the Hogan vs. Big Van Vader match and prevented it from coming to a decisive conclusion. Flair and Vader pounded on Hogan until Randy Savage and Sting came to the "Hulkster's" rescue.

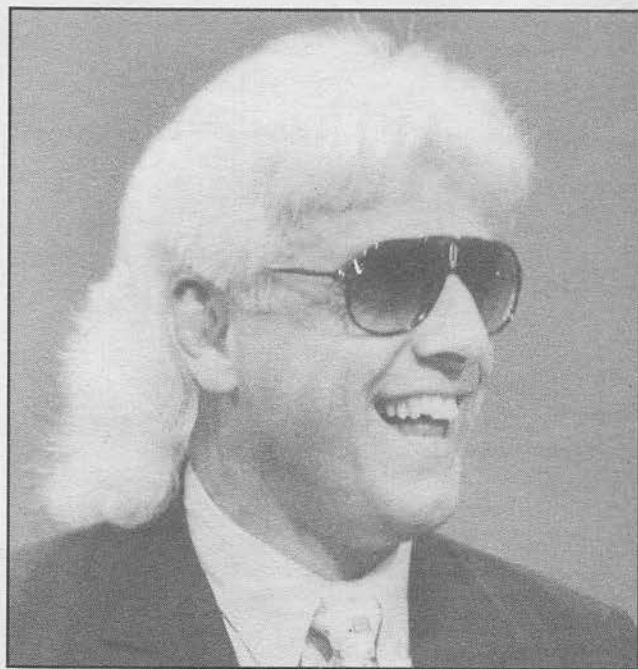
The Flair-Hogan feud was on again. When Hogan signed for a strap match with Vader at *WCW Uncensored*, Flair agreed to be in Vader's corner. Had Flair disavowed the terms of the "loser-must-retain" match? Was a full-time comeback imminent? In March, Flair signed to wrestle Antonio Inoki at an April supercard in North Korea. And Hogan kept looking over his shoulder.

Hogan vs. Flair—the feud we waited so long for is now the feud that won't go away. And that seemed to be bother Hogan greatly when we got him and Flair together ... "One on One."

HULK HOGAN: Ric Flair, I have something to say to you ...

RIC FLAIR: I'm sure you do,

ONE ON ONE



"You're the only one in the world who thinks I'm going to come back, and you're so obsessed with the idea that you've become paranoid!"

—Ric Flair

Hogan. You always do.

HH: I've had about enough of your mouth, Flair. Now you listen up, and you listen good: I thought you had some class ...

RF: You're right for once, Hogan ...

HH: And I thought you had some dignity.

RF: That makes two in a row, Hulk. We're on a roll.

HH: I thought you were a man of your word.

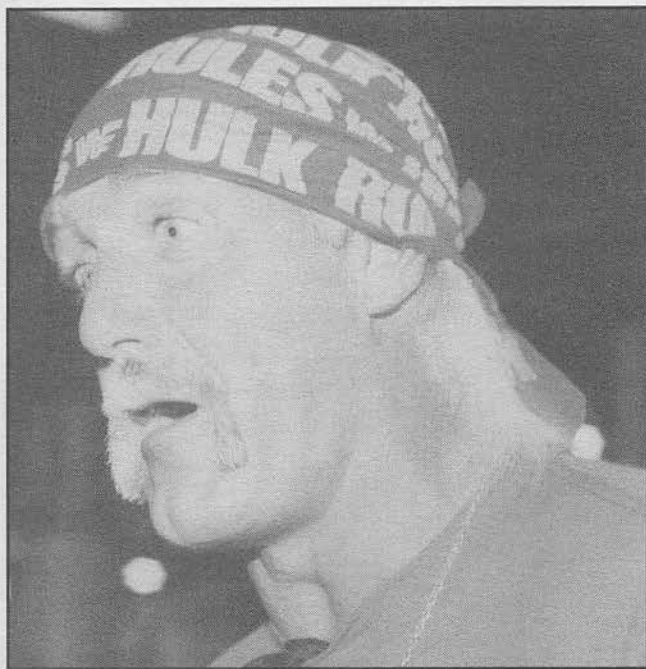
RF: Three in a row! That must be some kind of record!

HH: But I was wrong.

RF: So much for that streak.

HH: And let me tell you why, Flair: When we had that match back in October at *Halloween Havoc*, the terms were clear. That was a "loser-must-

N ONE



"I don't care if you wrestle or stick your head in my business. It's your head, and you're going to pay. You're retirement's going to be permanent this time, Flair!"

—Hulk Hogan

retire" match, man, and you signed on the dotted line. You not only gave me and the fans and everybody in wrestling your word that you would retire, you made a legal commitment. And you know what, man? I thought you were going to stick by your word. Days and weeks and months passed by, and you stayed away from the ring. You stuck to the terms of the deal and stayed retired. But you just couldn't keep your word. You had to come back. Flair, when a man isn't good on his word, he's not good on anything.

RF: I agree, Hogan, and that's where you're wrong, my friend. Let me ask you something, and you'd better give me an honest answer: Since October 24, 1994, have I wrestled in one sanctioned WCW match?

HH: No, but that's just splitting hairs, Flair. You interfered in my match at SuperBrawl, and you were right there at WCW Uncensored. There's no excuse for that.

RF: Excuse me, Hulk, but when I signed for that "loser-must-retire" match, I didn't mean retiring from life. There was nothing in the wording of that contract that said I couldn't sit at ringside, or second for Vader, or be an announcer or a manager or anything. The only thing it said I couldn't do is wrestle, and I haven't wrestled. Know what, Hogan? You're the only one who thinks I'm going to come back, and you're so obsessed with the idea that you've become paranoid. I'm all you can think about, day and night, and

there's just nothing you can do about it, is there? I've gotten into your mind, haven't I? Maybe I'm still wrestling in your dreams, but I am no longer an active professional wrestler. I've stuck to my word this whole time, and I've enjoyed doing it.

HH: What about that match against Inoki in North Korea, Flair? What about that? You're not managing or announcing in that. You're supposed to be *wrestling*.

RF: Just two retired men having a good time, Hogan. Nothing more, nothing less. Hey, Hogan, if you think I'm going to turn down a chance to wrestle at Slamboree, you're just dead wrong. Like I said, my heart's still beating.

HH: You're playing games, Flair. You know, and I know that you'd like nothing better than to see me lose that World championship belt ...

RF: Wrong again, Hogan. I'd like nothing better than to see you crippled or retired, preferably both. Personally, I don't care if Vader's champion or somebody else is champion, as long as it isn't you. That's the only thing that matters to me right now, and it's your biggest problem. *Whooooooo!*

HH: It wouldn't be any problem, Flair, if you'd just stay retired.

RF: What's the problem, Hogan, do you want me to come back and kick your butt? Go ahead, show me the contract, and I'll be back in that ring in no time at all. I'm rested, and I'm in the best shape of my life. There's no way you'd touch me right now. But you don't want that. You just want me to shut up and go away. Well, "Nature Boy" Ric Flair doesn't just shut up and go away. I have a right to help Vader or anyone I please, and if you can't deal with that, go cry to Bockwinkel.

HH: I don't cry to anyone, Flair. Go ahead, have it your way. I don't care if you wrestle or stick your head in my business. It's your head, and you're going to pay. You're retirement's going to be permanent this time, Flair.

RF: Hogan, I think I got under your skin, big man. □

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Sincerely Yours

(Continued from page 5)

to stop. Shawn doesn't need his bodyguard to cheat for him; he needs him for security purposes. Everyone knows that the "Heartbreak Kid" is the premier wrestler in the WWF, and everyone is trying to stop him from becoming a champion on any level. Shawn will have a long reign as a world champion; that is inevitable.

GREGG REESE

Pompano Beach, FL

STILL YOUNG

It was great to hear Dustin Rhodes talk about the problems he has been having ("Hotseat," May 1995). Dustin is an exceptional athlete who takes a lot of abuse because his critics feel that he must live up to the legend of his father, Dusty. No one will ever be able to fill the boots of "The American Dream," and it is not right to expect Dustin to do so, either. Dustin is his own person, separate from his father.

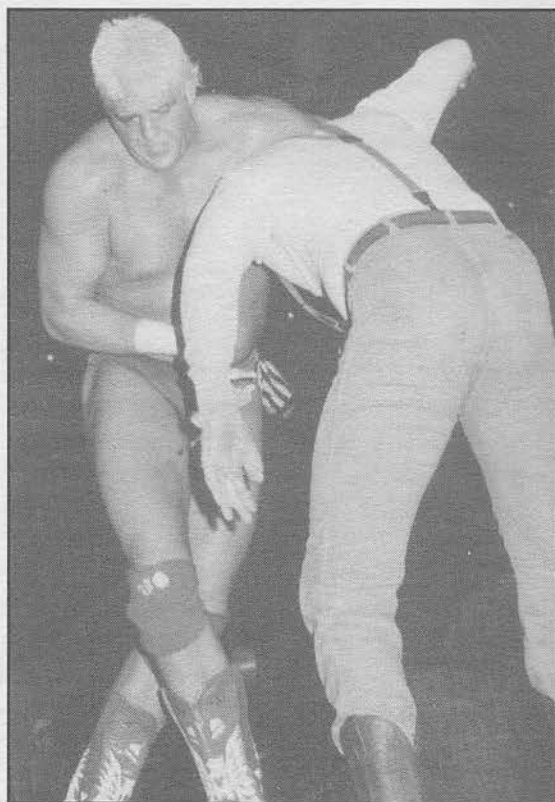
Dustin is still young, and he still has a lot of maturing to do in the ring. He has already held several important titles, including the U.S. belt. Even though he was not at Starrcade '94, he is still a great contender. There is no doubt in my mind that 1995 will be the year of "The Natural."

RITA CAROTHERS

Amarillo, TX

HOGAN'S CALL

After reading "Hulk Hogan's Call To Arms" (May 1995), I am convinced he is just trying to get everyone else to fight his battles for him. What gives him the right to call everyone together for a strategy meeting about the war against the rulebreakers? Wrestling is not a team sport; it's all about individual battles. It



Dustin Rhodes shouldn't be expected to be as good as his father, Dusty, writes Rita Carothers. She says Dustin has already accomplished a lot and will probably have a great 1995.

seems Hogan is looking for people to hide behind in his battles with Kevin Sullivan and Big Van Vader. Face it, Hogan: You're just going to have to fight your battles on your own sometime.

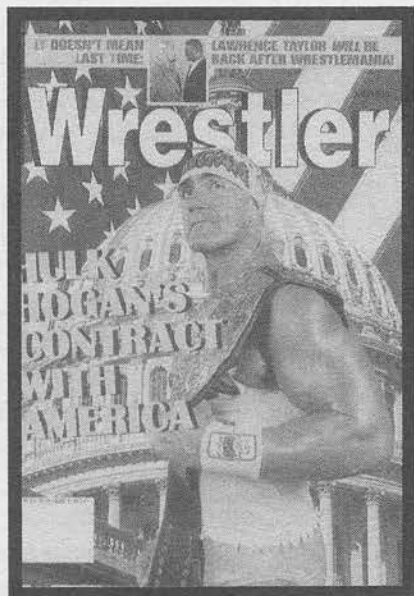
TAMMY SANDS

Denver, CO

(Continued on page 74)

This Month In...

Wrestler

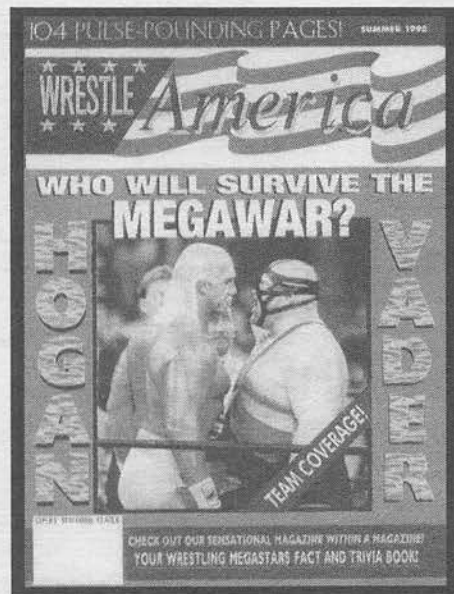


What are the components of **HULK HOGAN's** Contract with America? ... **MARTY JANNETTY** is gearing up for a run at **SHAWN MICHAELS** in the WWF. He prepared for his former tag team partner by going into ECW boot camp! ... **LAWRENCE TAYLOR** says his match against **BAM BAM BIGELOW** at WrestleMania was a one-shot deal. That's not what we're hearing! ... **HULK HOGAN** is trying to resurrect **BRIAN PILLMAN'S** career, but has he actually pushed him toward rulebreaking?

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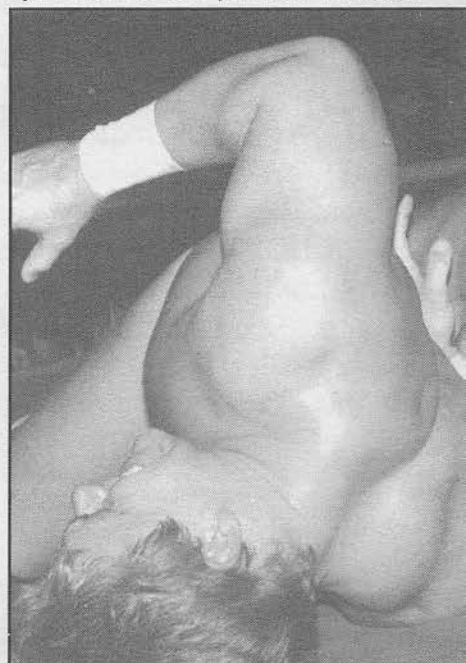
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(Continued from page 72)

GOOD GUY GONE MAD

Bob Backlund must really be losing it. I have been a fan of his for many years, and I thought that I saw it all when he chicken-winged his former manager, Arnold Skaaland. I realize he's still hurt that Skaaland threw in the towel, costing him the World title, but you think that Backlund would be over it by now.

It is disturbing to his long-time fans to see this one time all-American boy self-destruct the way he did. Now, thousands of wrestling fans will only remember Backlund as some crazed lunatic who tried to physically harm anyone who got in his way. He will be remembered for his crazed scream and expression and not his excellent technical skills or his strict adherence to the rulebook. It wasn't long ago that Backlund was Hall of Fame bound as one of the greatest fan favorites in history. Now he will just be another



good guy gone mad.

GERRY KERRIN

Akron, OH

CALLING TULLY

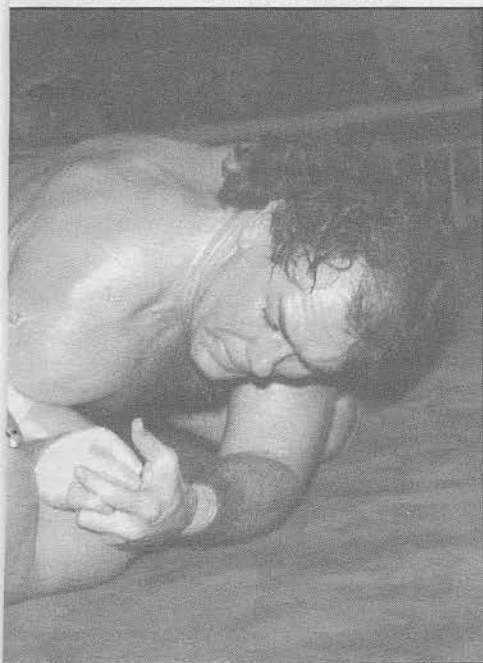
I'm glad to see Tully Blanchard hasn't retired from wrestling, but I was surprised to learn he had showed up for a few matches in ECW. I never figured Blanchard's style was suited to an ultraviolent federation like Extreme Championship Wrestling. I just can't picture him whacking Cactus Jack over the head with a frying pan or taking on Sabu in a barbed-wire baseball bat match. I'd like to see him return to WCW and revive The Four Horsemen.

I still believe very strongly that The Four Horsemen was the best supergroup in wrestling history. No rulebreaking clique terrorized fan favorites the way the Horsemen did. And Blanchard was always a big part of their success!

RON FAIRVIEW

Macon, GA □

Tully Blanchard has been battling ECW heavyweight champion Shane Douglas in recent months. Reader Ron Fairview would like to see him return to WCW and revive The Four Horsemen.



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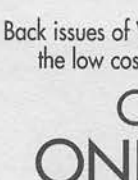
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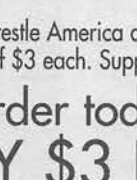
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On The Road

(Continued from page 10)

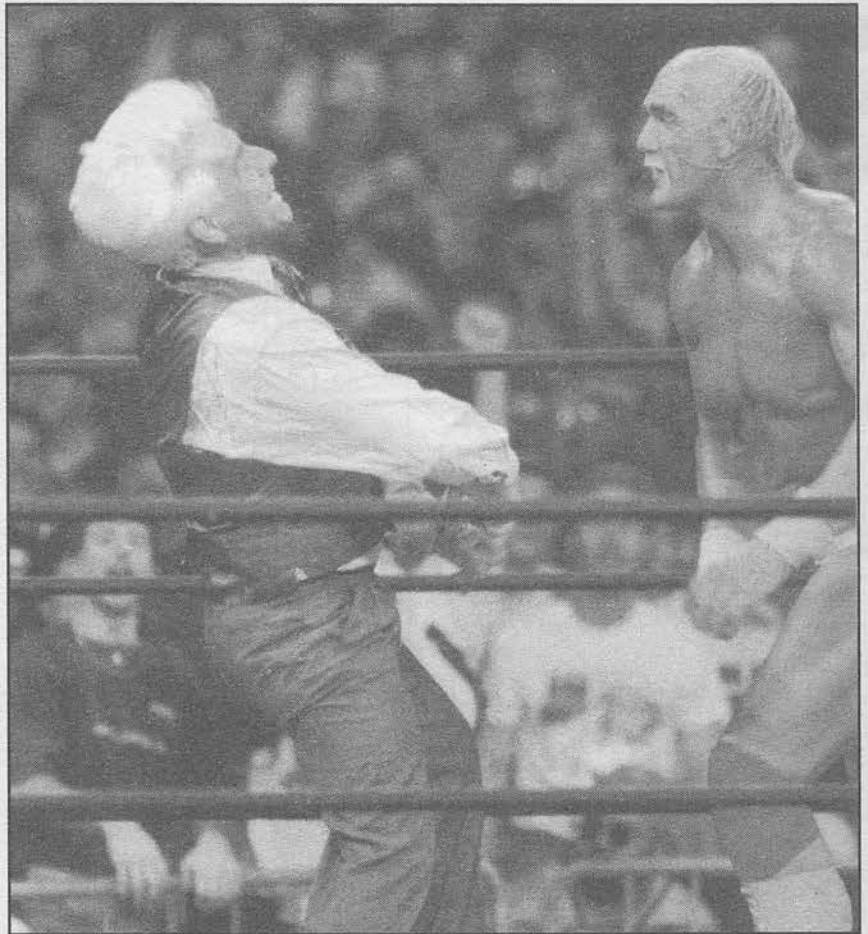
just as he is doing now. He has become a corner man for Vader, who is challenging Hogan for the World title. Gee, what a coincidence.

I don't have a problem with Flair taking a six-month break from the sport. Another embarrassing championship loss to the same opponent would force just about any wrestler to take a step back and regroup. Hogan has done the same thing on several occasions and appeared refreshed upon his return. Even Bret Hart took two months off after losing the WWF World title to Bob Backlund.

But if Flair was going to take a six-month break, he should have called it a sabbatical. He shouldn't have dressed it up in the glittery robe of a retirement and a comeback. The pomp surrounding his circumstance is clouding the more important issue: He will be in direct violation of a match stipulation if and when he comes back.

This is where WCW is at fault. Executives were present when Flair and Hogan signed for the match, and no one was in the dark regarding the stipulation. In fact, the suits had the power to remove the stipulation from the contract. But they didn't. Regardless of the outcome, the powers-that-be at CNN Center in Atlanta knew one of their top two drawing cards would no longer be around.

The executives also have the power to enforce the stipulation, although I doubt any one of them is in any hurry to tell Flair that he cannot wrestle at WCW events. When Flair appeared in Vader's corner at SuperBrawl V in Baltimore, he received the biggest positive response of any wrestling personality on the card, including Hogan. Nobody likes a party pooper, so WCW will likely stand pat while Flair violates a match stipu-



Flair got a little taste of what he misses so dearly when he interfered in the Hogan-Vader match at SuperBrawl. Before allowing Flair to return, WCW officials should make him sit out a year, urges Chris Bernucca.

lation. When officials do not enforce the rules, is it any wonder we have a breed of wrestlers known as rulebreakers?

We will now make my publisher cringe by re-introducing Jordan to the mix. When he retired in October 1993, he did not say that he would never be back. He left the door ajar. However, the door was locked for one year, the amount of time an NBA player must sit out after retiring. Any return prior to that must be okayed by the league's Board of Governors. Jordan did his time on the pine and could have come back at the beginning of the 1994-

95 NBA season.

WCW executives should have shown some foresight. No one wanted to see Flair leave wrestling on anyone's terms except his own, and no one wants to deny him the opportunity to return. But in order to preserve integrity, the stipulation of the match should carry some weight. Flair should not be allowed to return to WCW for at least one year. That is plenty of time for him to think about how much he misses the sport and how much it misses him. If the fire and desire are still present in October, we'll welcome Flair back with open arms. □

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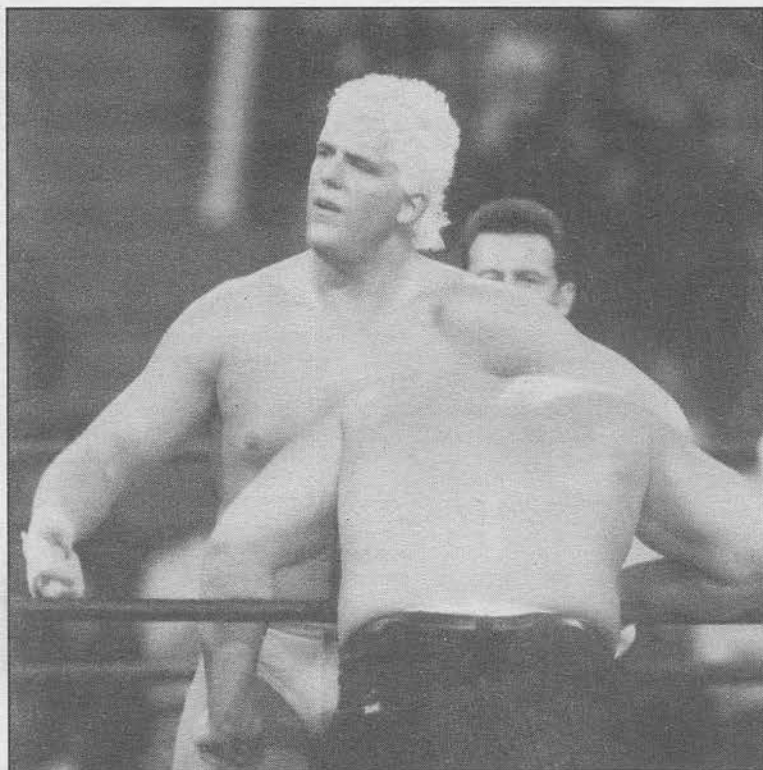
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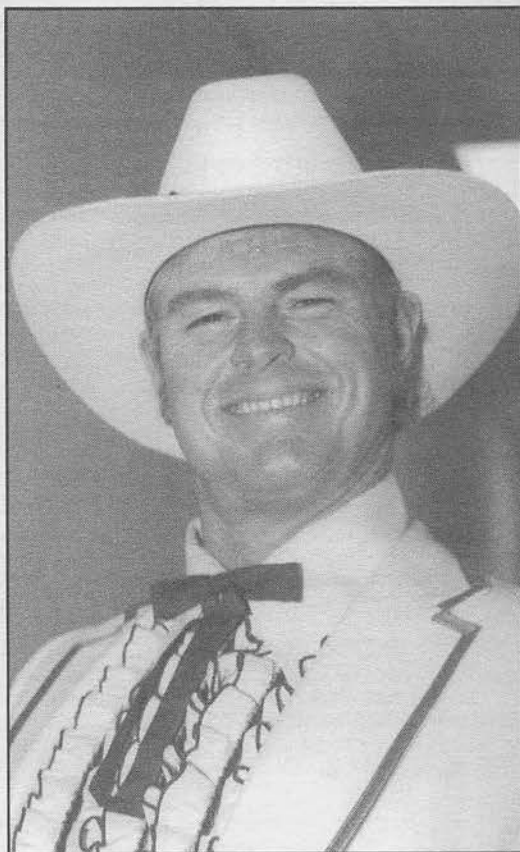
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Behind The Door

(Continued from page 12)



When Dustin Rhodes suplexed Blacktop Bully at SuperBrawl (above), he did no permanent damage. What would have happened had one of them fallen out of a speeding truck? Col. Parker (right) naively believes neither man was in danger!



going on a hayride.

After Rhodes and Bully got on board, a truck driver drove the vehicle at 55 miles per hour on the back roads of Tupelo. Police cars escorted the truck, WCW cameramen rode alongside, and a helicopter hovered overhead. Only once—when a bus full of children drove past at an intersection—did the truck slow.

Rhodes and Bully spent most of the match trying to retain their balance and/or keep from falling out of the truck. There really wasn't much action. The goal was to blow a horn attached to the top of the truck; the only way to get to it was to subject yourself to more danger. While sitting on top of the cage, preparing to blow the horn, Bully could have been jarred by a

bump in the road. *Splat!* Rhodes wins by disqualification.

I'm really glad it didn't happen that way.

"So am I," Bully said. "But I knew that wasn't going to happen. I had a firm grip, and I have really good balance. Nothing was going to stop me, not on this night."

"I wasn't worried about Bully," added Col. Robert Parker, his manager. "He knew what the dangers were going in, and he was prepared. All my men are prepared. You're worrying about things that you don't need to worry about. A truck isn't that dangerous."

Bully, a former trucker, is familiar with the backs of trucks, although he is more used to unloading them than he is

wrestling inside of them. He admitted that he probably felt more at home than Rhodes, "who would've been more comfortable in a pigpen. I didn't know what smelled so bad, Rhodes or the cow manure."

Actually, WCW officials came out smelling pretty bad after a card that wasn't nearly as action-packed as billed and rather slow for most of the 150 minutes. Perhaps it's time for WCW and all of the other federations out there, including ECW, to realize this simple fact: Nothing is more exciting than pure professional wrestling. Put two men in a bare ring, and the action peaks. Place obstacles in their way, and they only get slowed down.

Even at 55 miles per hour. □

Inside Wrestling

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June 1987/Stories include: Piper-Adonis, Horsemen, Adams, Hall, Brody.
August 1987/Stories include: Dusty & Nikita, Hogan, Mike Von, Cornette.
September 1987/Stories include: Hogan-Race, R&R Exp., Rich, Honky Tonk.
October 1987/Stories include: R&R Express, Hogan, Taylor-Adams, Lawler.
November 1987/Stories include: War Games, Mr. T, Bulldogs, Rhodes.
December 1987/Stories include: Freebirds, Rhodes, Magnum, Savage, Perez.
January 1988/Stories include: R&R-Horsemen, Hogan, Flair-Garvin.
February 1988/Stories include: Savage, Kevin Von, Sting, Tully & Arn.
March 1988/Stories include: Bigelow, Adams, Koloff, Honky Tonk, Freebirds.

April 1988/Stories include: Luger-Flair, Ultimate Warrior, Andre-Hogan-DiBiase.
May 1988/Stories include: Zbyszko, DiBiase, Warriors, Rockers, Fritz Von.
June 1988/Stories include: Warriors, Savage, R&R Express, Baby Doll.
July 1988/Stories include: Hogan-Savage-DiBiase, Kerry & Hayes, Sting.
August 1988/Stories include: Savage, Missy Hyatt, Sting, Hayes, Honky Tonk.
October 1988/Stories include: Megapowers vs. Megabucks, Horsemen, Lawler.
November 1988/Stories include: Rhodes, Kerry, Luger, Muraco, Freebirds.
December 1988/Stories include: Powers of Pain, Ultimate, Flair, Piper.
January 1989/Stories include: R&R Express, Hogan, Sting, Arn, Kerry-Lawler.
February 1989/Stories include: Hogan-Bossman, Tully & Arn, Warriors-Windham-Sting.
March 1989/Stories include: Hennig, Midnight, Fuller & Golden, Ultimate.
May 1989/Stories include: Hogan, Steiner, Morton, Bad Co., Taylor.
June 1989/Stories include: Hogan-Savage, Luger, Steamboat-Flair.
July 1989/Stories include: Savage, Windham, Kerry, Demolition, Sting.
August 1989/Stories include: Hulkamania, Steamboat, Rude, Cornette.
September 1989/Stories include: Savage-Hogan, Luger, Mascaras, Rhodes.
October 1989/Stories include: Hall & Pillman & Vicious, Hennig, Swats vs. Warriors, Rhodes.
November 1989/Stories include: Elizabeth, Sting, Luger, Paul E., Mascaras.
December 1989/Stories include: Rhodes, Flair, Hogan-Zeus, Embry.
January 1990/Stories include: Hogan, Sting-Flair, Roberts-DiBiase.
February 1990/Stories include: Warriors-Skyscrapers, Zenk, Rude-Piper.
April 1990/Stories include: Starrcade '89, Ultimate, Rhodes, Sawyer.
May 1990/Stories include: Hogan-Ultimate, Luger, Woman, Lawler, LPWA.

June 1990/Stories include: Sting, Saito-Zbyszko, Earthquake, Ultimate, Jarrett.
July 1990/Stories include: Steiners, Sting, Warrior & Hogan, Earthquake.
August 1990/Stories include: Luger-Flair, Hogan, Warrior, Taylor.
September 1990/Stories include: Hogan, Duggan, JYD, Adams, Horsemen.
October 1990/Stories include: Sting, Legion of Doom, Bushwhackers, Gigante.
November 1990/Stories include: Flair, Hogan, Vicious, Slaughter, Orient.
December 1990/Stories include: Hogan, Sting, Kerry, Cornette, Zbyszko.
January 1991/Stories include: LOD, Adams, Steiners, Lawler-Funk.
February 1991/Stories include: Taylor, Hogan, Martel, Sting, all-annoying team.
March 1991/Stories include: Hogan-Earthquake, Roberts-Martel, Sting.
April 1991/Stories include: Flair-Sting, Steiners, Piper, Zbyszko, Slaughter.
May 1991/Stories include: Savage-Warrior, Steiners, Sting, Virgil.
June 1991/Stories include: Steiners, LOD, Koloff, I-C belt, Dundees.
July 1991/Stories include: Hogan, Virgil, Funk, Nastys, Steiners, Spivey.
September 1991/Stories include: Justice-Hogan, Hyatt, Rude, Hennig.
October 1991/Stories include: Savage & Liz, Hogan & Warrior, Luger.
November 1991/Stories include: Hogan-Savage, Luger, Flair, War Games.
December 1991/Stories include: SummerSlam, York, Simmons.
January 1992/Stories include: Sting, Freebirds, Hart, Rhodes, Rotundo.
February 1992/Stories include: Luger, Hart, Patriot, Rude, Thesz-Rogers.
April 1992/Stories include: Hart, Steiners, Liger-Pillman, Roberts.
May 1992/Stories include: Justice-Hogan, Liger, Gilbert, Repo Man.
June 1992/Stories include: Sting, Hogan, Race, M.A. Bagwell, Atlas.
August 1992/Stories include: Savage-Flair, Jack-Badd, Christopher, LOD.

September 1992/Stories include: War Games, Hogan, Vader, Kamala.
October 1992/Stories include: SummerSlam, Steiner-Muta, Simmons.
November 1992/Stories include: Flair, Warrior, Vader, top rope rule.
December 1992/Stories include: Flair, Ramon, Heavenly Bodies, Jarrett.
March 1993/Stories include: Michaels, Nikita Koloff, Windham-Rhodes.
April 1993/Stories include: WWF new blood, Sting-Vader, Flair, Paul E.
May 1993/Stories include: WrestleMania IX analysis, Andre tribute, Muta.
June 1993/Stories include: Doink, Vader-Sting, Jimmy Hart, Steiners, Lawler.
July 1993/Stories include: Bravo, Gonzales, Bulldog, Ramon, Arn, Tatanka.
August 1993/Stories include: Christopher-Michaels, Hogan-Yokozuna, Hart.
September 1993/Stories include: Steiners, Slamboree, Ramon, Sting & Smith, Hart.
October 1993/Stories include: SummerSlam preview, Money Inc., Nanny Simpson, Vader-Vicious, Hart-Lawler.
November 1993/Stories include: Heavenly Bodies, Jannetty, Rude-Flair, Hogan, Luger, Power Bombs.
December 1993/Stories include: Fytch, Austin, Luger, Sting & Flair, Yokozuna.
February 1994/Stories include: Hogan, Duggan, Doinks, Blonds, holiday wishes.
March 1994/Stories include: Nastys, Parker, Borge, 1994 predictions.
May 1994/Stories include: Flair-Rude, Hart, Luger, Morton, Heenan-Bockwinkel.
June 1994/Stories include: Steamboat, Snuka, Anthony, Bruise Bros., Blayze.
August 1994/Stories include: Piper, Hogan, 911, Freebirds, rulebreakers.
September 1994/Stories include: Nastys, Undertaker, Volkoff, Flair-Steamboat.
November 1994/Stories include: DiBiase, Sting, Koloff, Diesel, Cactus-Sabu.
December 1994/Stories include: Hogan, Bret, Rottens, Cactus, AAA midgets.
January 1995/Stories include: Vader, Diesel & Razor, Hart, Luger, Sabu.

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The Insider

(Continued from page 14)

"What Jordan did took enormous courage and tremendous love. He really doesn't care what people think. I have to admit I'd be concerned. Any comeback is measured against your previous record. Would I be as dominant?"

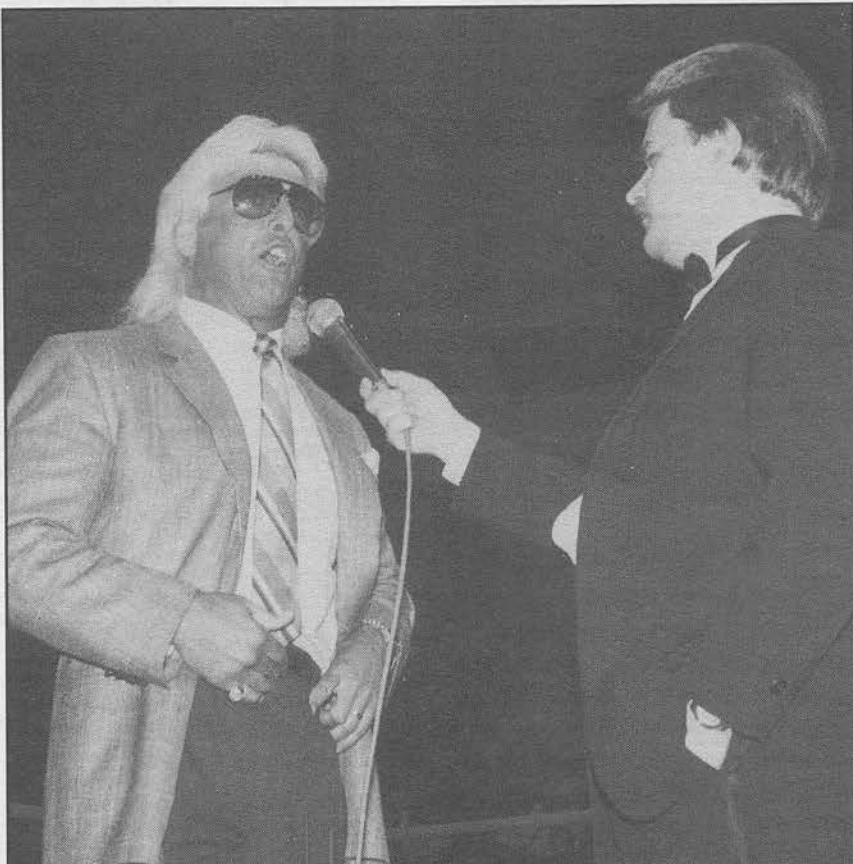
Flair swallowed a piece of sauteed burdock and smiled.

"I know I could be," he continued. "But that's not why I'd return. I miss the mat, the smells, the trainer's table, the camaraderie. People think because wrestling is an individual sport there's no relationship between the wrestlers. It isn't true. Just the small talk—I miss that."

"You can get that outside the ring," suggested Hunter, demonstrating again a complete misunderstanding of the wrestling psyche.

Flair and I exchanged glances. I looked at my plate of fried tofu and let him speak. "You don't get it, Lizzie," Flair explained. "When you're not involved, you're left out. You can touch the ring, taste the ring, sit in it, on it, or on top of it, but if you don't have the boots on, you might as well be playing a video game."

After we dropped Flair off, Hunter lit her 20th cigarette of the day. I decided not to say anything this time, and instead concentrated on our upcoming adventure. There is a bar in New Orleans they call the Rising Sun. The bartender, Paul "The Bearded One" Cohen, runs feud-settling matches in a small bayou shack. I'd heard about the place for years but didn't believe in its existence until, over a few too many beers one night, Randy Savage admitted to



If Ric Flair returns to active competition on a full-time basis—and I hope he does—he'll do it because he misses the little things about the mat sport. Those are things Liz Hunter will never understand.

me that he and Rick Steamboat once thrashed it out there.

"You've never seen anything like it," Savage said. "The ring's set up over the bayou. You can hear snakes hissing, gators snapping, and a mist settles about mid-ring. It's like a horror film."

"You leave all your demons there. People think Steamboat and I had a great match at WrestleMania III. They should have seen us go at it in New Orleans."

Rumors are Hogan and Beefcake have made arrangements to meet there during Jazz Fest. If so, I wanted to visit J.T.'s Voodoo

Lounge and see if \$50 worth of dark magic could encourage Hogan out of the ring and into the swamp. I wondered if the gators could digest all that suntan oil. I wondered if Saks would pay for the spell.

After New Orleans, we'd need to rush back east for WrestleMania XI, and I anticipated mucho moanin' from my traveling companion. Maybe if I dipped her American Express card in some voodoo juice, she'd shut up. Either way, the second she turns her back, I'm burning the Duran Duran tape. A man can take only so much. □

COLLECTOR'S CORNER

Wrestling historians, rejoice! Some of the back issues in this ad have not been offered for sale for more than a decade—but a recent transfer of warehouse inventory from New York to Pennsylvania uncovered a small supply of these classic publications! Obviously, supplies are extremely limited, so all magazines will be sold on a first-come, first-served basis only. Prices quoted are based on the rarity of the issue and the number of available copies. For speediest service, use VISA or MasterCard or make payment by money order or certified check. Please don't send cash! Don't miss out on this once-in-a-lifetime chance to own a memorable piece of wrestling history! Once they're gone, they'll never be offered for sale again—so order today!

WRESTLING REVUE

Published between 1959 and 1964, *Wrestling Revue* is acknowledged as one of the finest series of wrestling magazines ever produced. These beautiful editions, all edited and published by Stanley Weston (founder of *Pro Wrestling Illustrated*, *The Wrestler*, and *Inside Wrestling*, among so many other titles) set a standard for all wrestling magazines that followed, and are available now for the first time in many years!

Fall 1961 Edouard Carpentier challenges Floyd Patterson, Bruiser vs. Cowboy Bob Ellis, The Zebra Kid, killer holds, action at The Kiel, Nick Bockwinkel vs. Dr. X, and full-color action of the Bastiens vs. Shires & Nelson. **\$25**

December 1961 An extensive Buddy Rogers interview, Bobo Brazil, Fred Blassie, Pepper Gomez, the Torres brothers, Whipper Watson, "Sailor" Art Thomas, Ricki Starr, plus a full-color centerfold of Mark Lewin & Don Curtis. **\$35**

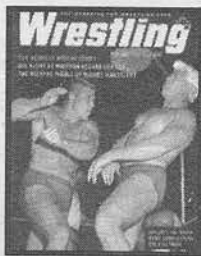
February 1962 Dick Beyer, Mitsuo Arakawa, Edouard Carpentier vs. Lou Thesz, Angelo Poffo, a five-girl battle royal, Don and Jackie Fargo, Billy Zabyszko, Larry Chene, plus a full-color centerfold of Guy & Joe Brunetti. **\$30**

April 1962 Wilbur Snyder, Luis Martinez, Madison Square Garden closeup, Yulie Brynner, Billy Wolfe, Don Leo Jonathan vs. Pat O'Connor, closeup on midgets, plus a full-color centerfold of Bearcat Wright. **\$30**

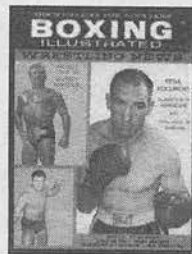
June 1962 Eddie Graham, Verne Gagne, wrestlers vs. boxers, Dory Dixon, Yukon Eric, Tony Lanza, Lorraine Johnson vs. Kay Noble, Skull Murphy & Brute Bernard, The Crusher, plus a full-color centerfold of Red Bastien. **\$25**

December 1963 The Destroyer, "Maniac" Mark Lewin, Paul Diamond, Ernie Ladd, Judy Grable, Bill Watts, Pat O'Connor, Don Duffy, The Scufflin' Hillbillies, plus a full-color centerfold of Lou Thesz. **\$35**

February 1964 Edouard Carpentier vs. Killer Kowalski, Florida wrestling, Mad Dog Vachon, Fabulous Moolah, Fritz Von Erich, Rene Goulet, Cyclops, plus a full-color centerfold of Bruno Sammartino. **\$35**



BOXING ILLUSTRATED/ WRESTLING NEWS



In November 1958, Stanley Weston launched *Boxing Illustrated/Wrestling News*, an innovative concept in sports magazines. Each issue's content consisted of approximately 60 percent boxing and 40 percent wrestling, resulting in the most complete magazine for ring aficionados the world has ever known.

May 1959 Boxing: Ray Robinson, James Jeffries, Rube Vargas, Willie Pep, Joey Maxim, Denny Moyer. **Wrestling:** Gene Stanlee, Larry Hamilton, Happy Humphrey, "Cowboy" Bob Ellis. **\$25**

June 1959 Boxing: Gene Fullmer, Jack Britton, Gustav Scholz, Mauro Vazquez, Rocky Graziano. **Wrestling:** Buddy Rogers, Don Leo Jonathan, Hard Boiled Haggerty, Omayo Kato. **\$35**

September 1959 Boxing: Carmen Basilio, the perfect kayo, Tiger Flowers, Joe Brown, Paolo Rosi. **Wrestling:** Edouard Carpentier, Ricki Starr, Enrique Torres. **\$25**

October 1962 Boxing: Special edition previewing the Floyd Patterson vs. Sonny Liston bout! **Wrestling:** "Handsome" Johnny Barend, Andre Drapp, "Sailor" Art Thomas, five pages of results. **\$30**

October 1963 Boxing: Cassius Clay, Joe Lynch, Frankie Narvaez, Tommy Loughran. **Wrestling:** Crusher vs. Verne Gagne, Tony Manous, The Dirty Daltons, results. **\$25**

February 1964 Boxing: Sonny Liston, Joey Archer, 1963 in review, Cassius Clay. **Wrestling:** Bruno Sammartino vs. Gorilla Monsoon, Emile Dupre, Bruiser vs. Bob Ellis, results. **\$30**

COLLECTOR'S CORNER

WRESTLING REVUE

- ☐ Fall 1961
- ☐ December 1961
- ☐ February 1962
- ☐ April 1962
- ☐ June 1962
- ☐ December 1963
- ☐ February 1964

BOXING ILLUSTRATED/ WRESTLING NEWS

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On Assignment

(Continued from page 16)

asked, not sure I wanted to know.

"There's hot mud and oil wrestling at the Vixen Room," he said, naming an adults-only after-hours club. "I heard Wendi Richter might show up."

He arrived back two hours later, his clothes caked with mud and vegetable oil. I said nothing, but decided at my next opportunity that I had better call Stu Saks.

"C'mon, we have to run," he said. "There isn't much time."

From Virginia, we drove to Charlotte, to a private helicopter field, where waiting for us was Ric Flair.

"What the hell is this all about?" Flair asked. "Ellner said it was an emergency."

"I have no idea," I replied honestly. I took Flair aside. "I think Ellner's having a nervous breakdown."

"What the hell do I care?" Flair thundered. But then the helicopter arrived, and the next thing we knew we were airborne and heading west.

"Where the hell are we going?" Flair demanded.

"I had a dream last night," Ellner said. "You'll see."

We touched down in Chicago, where a waiting limousine hurried us to the new United Center.

"I thought it would be nice to watch a basketball game with you guys," Ellner said. "My gift."

I wondered who was paying for the helicopter, the limo, and the fourth-row, center-court seats.

Certainly not Stu Saks. Maybe *Mademoiselle*.

The game marked the return of Michael Jordan to the Windy City, and when his name was announced, the place erupted. "Even I got goosebumps," Flair admitted. "This is pretty good. Actually, this is amazing."

It was thrilling to watch the master return to the sport he once dominated. And even more thrilling to see fans in Chicago pay

Neither Flair nor I understood what he was talking about. Nor could we fathom how a grown man could willingly eat seaweed. But Ellner's ways are often as brilliant as they are incomprehensible. For the next three hours, Flair spoke candidly about his own retirement, his hopes for the future, his fantasies of returning, a la Jordan.

"I see it now," he said, a light shining in his eyes. "Showing up at Starrcade, winning the title back with a move no one has ever seen before. Oh, yeah, I dream about it. And like Jordan, I'd come back for the love of the sport. If you do it that way, the accomplishments tend to fall into place."

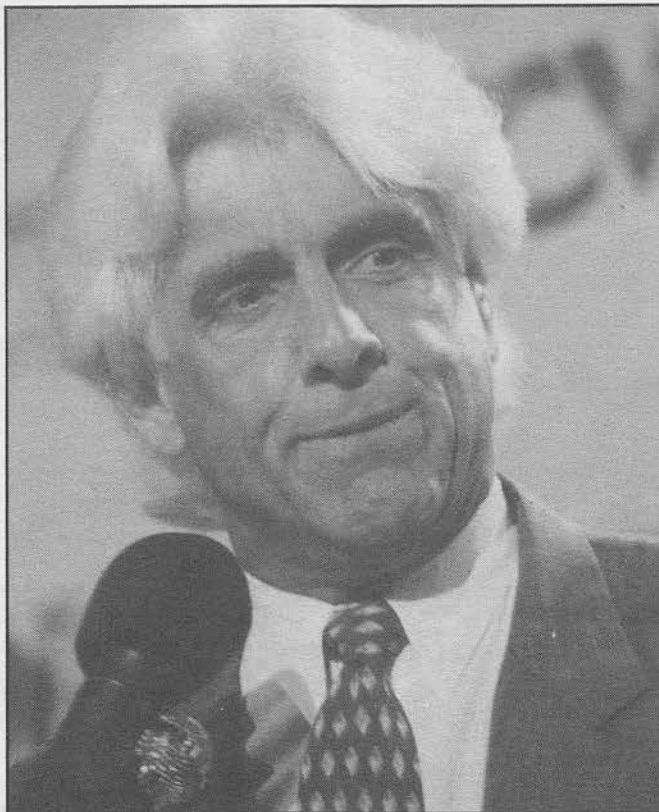
Before dropping Flair off at the airport, we caught a small wrestling card in town. "I remember when I used to wrestle at these cards," Flair said. "I thought 500 people was a huge crowd. I loved those days. Very pure, very sincere. You did it because you loved it."

As we drove south toward New Orleans and Jazz Fest (another destination not on the original itinerary), I wondered if Ellner really thought his little gig would get Flair

back into the ring on a full-time basis.

"Did I tell you about a dream I had last night?" he asked. I lit a cigarette. He didn't notice. It was going to be a long trip, but a rather interesting one.

I think. □



Ric Flair enjoyed watching Michael Jordan and the Chicago Bulls, but it remains to be seen if he will follow Jordan's lead and unretire.

homage to their ultimate sports hero.

"In my mind, I retired from the wrestling magazines," Ellner said later at the Japanese restaurant in which he forced us to dine. "That's when I wrote that other story. This marks my triumphant return."

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2444	Big Head Todd/Monsters	3472	Dire Straits	5262	Kansas	7441	Phish	8251	Talking Heads
4361	Billy Idol	3733	Dream Theater	5461	King's X	7462	Pink Floyd	8321	Tears For Fears
5632	Billy Joel	3871	Duran Duran	5462	The Kinks	7641	Poison	6841	Ted Nugent
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2524	Black Sabbath	2741	Eddie Brickell	5332	Led Zeppelin	7745	Primus	8372	Testament
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9431	Cheryl Wheeler	8462	George Thorogood	6431	Midnight Oil	7652	Rollins Band	9271	W.A.S.P.
2461	Cinderella	4461	Gin Blossoms	6443	Mighty M. Bosstones	7871	Rush	9272	Warrant
2656	Collective Soul	4721	Grateful Dead	6463	Ministry	7223	Sacred Reich	9441	White Zombie
2663	Concrete Blonde	4731	Great White	6252	Mitch Malloy	7261	Santana	9463	The Who
2683	Counting Crows	4737	Green Day	6672	Morrissey	7374	Sepultura	9454	Wilson Phillips
2682	Coverdale/Page	4735	Green Jelly	6682	Motley Crue	6262	Sinead O'Connor	9671	World Party
2693	Cowboy Junkies	4861	Guns N' Roses	6681	Motorhead	7541	Skid Row	9371	Yes
2726	Cracker	4274	Hardline	6721	Mr. Big	7523	Slaughter	6251	Yngwie Malmsteen
2723	Cranberries	4321	Heart	6331	Ned's Atomic Dustbin	7524	Slayer	1181	ZZ Top

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OFFICIAL RATINGS

TOP 15

- 1—DIESEL
(2) WWF World champion
- 2—THE UNDERTAKER
(-) No. 2 contender: WWF World title
- 3—STING
(11) No. 3 contender: WCW World title

- 4—HULK HOGAN
(1) WCW World champion
- 5—RAZOR RAMON
(9) No. 3 contender: WWF World title
- 6—BUBBA ROGERS
(-) No. 4 contender: WCW World title
- 7—BIG VAN VADER
(3) U.S. heavyweight champion

- 8—JEFF JARRETT
(6) WWF Intercontinental champion
- 9—BRET HART
(7) No. 5 contender: WWF World title
- 10—ARN ANDERSON
(8) WCW TV champion
- 11—SHANE DOUGLAS
(15) ECW heavyweight champion

- 12—SHAWN MICHAELS
(4) No. 4 contender: WWF World title
- 13—BILL DUNDEE
(-) USWA heavyweight champion
- 14—BOBBY BLAZE
(-) Smoky Mountain champion
- 15—BRIAN CHRISTOPHER
(-) USWA Southern champion

WCW

- 1—HULK HOGAN
(1) 275, Venice Beach, CA
- 2—BIG VAN VADER
(2) 450, Denver, CO
- 3—ARN ANDERSON
(3) 249, Minneapolis, MN

- 4—STING
(6) 260, Venice Beach, CA
- 5—BUBBA ROGERS
(14) 310, Cobb County, GA
- 6—JOHNNY B. BADD
(4) 235, Macon, GA
- 7—RANDY SAVAGE
(12) 237, Sarasota, FL

- 8—HACKSAW DUGGAN
(11) 280, Glens Falls, NY
- 9—ALEX WRIGHT
(9) 222, Berlin, Germany
- 10—MENG
(-) 294, Tonga
- 11—AVALANCHE
(8) 502, Montreal, Quebec

- 12—BRIAN PILLMAN
(-) 226, Cincinnati, OH
- 13—STEVE AUSTIN
(-) 241, Dallas, TX
- 14—PAUL ORNDORFF
(-) 253, Brandon, FL
- 15—STEVE REGAL
(-) 247, Blackpool, England

WWF

- 1—DIESEL
(1) 356, Las Vegas, NV
- 2—JEFF JARRETT
(2) 230, Nashville, TN
- 3—THE UNDERTAKER
(14) 328, parts unknown

- 4—RAZOR RAMON
(5) 287, Miami, FL
- 5—SHAWN MICHAELS
(3) 234, San Antonio, TX
- 6—BRET HART
(4) 234, Calgary, Alberta
- 7—LEX LUGER
(9) 265, Chicago, IL

- 8—JERRY LAWLER
(-) 234, Memphis, TN
- 9—BAM BAM BIGELOW
(-) 368, Mt. Laurel, NJ
- 10—BOB BACKLUND
(11) 234, Princeton, MN
- 11—HAKUSHI
(7) 231, Tokyo, Japan

- 12—KING KONG BUNDY
(6) 446, Atlantic City, NJ
- 13—DAVEY BOY SMITH
(8) 245, Leeds, England
- 14—OWEN HART
(10) 227, Calgary, Alberta
- 15—MABEL
(12) 503, Harlem, NY

MOST POPULAR

- 1—HULK HOGAN
Last issue: No. 2 Most Popular
- 2—RAZOR RAMON
Last issue: No. 4 Most Popular
- 3—RANDY SAVAGE
Last issue: No. 5 Most Popular

- 4—STING
Last issue: No. 1 Most Popular
- 5—BRET HART
Last issue: No. 6 Most Popular
- 6—DIESEL
Last issue: No. 3 Most Popular
- 7—THE UNDERTAKER
Last issue: No. 8 Most Popular

- 8—JOHNNY B. BADD
Last issue: No. 11 Most Popular
- 9—LEX LUGER
Last issue: No. 9 Most Popular
- 10—DAVEY BOY SMITH
Last issue: No. 7 Most Popular
- 11—HACKSAW DUGGAN
Last issue: No. 10 Most Popular

- 12—CACTUS JACK
Last issue: No. 12 Most Popular
- 13—TONY ANTHONY
Last issue: No. 14 Most Popular
- 14—TITO SANTANA
Last issue: unrated
- 15—TRACEY SMOTHERS
Last issue: unrated

MOST HATED

- 1—BIG VAN VADER
Last issue: No. 1 Most Hated
- 2—BOB BACKLUND
Last issue: No. 4 Most Hated
- 3—JEFF JARRETT
Last issue: No. 6 Most Hated

- 4—JERRY LAWLER
Last issue: No. 5 Most Hated
- 5—SID VICIOUS
Last issue: No. 10 Most Hated
- 6—SHAWN MICHAELS
Last issue: No. 2 Most Hated
- 7—BUDDY LANDELL
Last issue: No. 13 Most Hated

- 8—BUBBA ROGERS
Last issue: unrated
- 9—OWEN HART
Last issue: No. 3 Most Hated
- 10—TATANKA
Last issue: No. 8 Most Hated
- 11—KING KONG BUNDY
Last issue: No. 7 Most Hated

- 12—AVALANCHE
Last issue: No. 12 Most Hated
- 13—TERRY FUNK
Last issue: unrated
- 14—SHANE DOUGLAS
Last issue: No. 14 Most Hated
- 15—KEVIN SULLIVAN
Last issue: unrated

TOP 15

- 1—HARLEM HEAT
(1) WCW World tag team champions
- 2—THE SMOKIN' GUNNS
(2) WWF World tag team champions
- 3—THE NASTY BOYS
(3) No. 1 contenders: WCW World tag title
- 4—ELI & JACOB BLU
(5) No. 1 contenders: WWF World tag title
- 5—THE ROCK 'N' ROLL EXPRESS
(13) Smoky Mountain tag team champions

- 6—DIESEL & RAZOR RAMON
(-) No. 2 contenders: WWF World tag title
- 7—THE HEADSHRINKERS
(4) No. 3 contenders: WWF World tag title
- 8—MARCUS BAGWELL & THE PATRIOT
(6) No. 2 contenders: WCW World tag title
- 9—RANDY SAVAGE & STING
(9) No. 3 contenders: WCW World tag title
- 10—PG-13
(14) USWA tag team champions

- 11—CHRIS BENOIT & DEAN MALENKO
(-) ECW tag team champions
- 12—THE HEAVENLY BODIES
(11) No. 3 contenders: WWF World tag title
- 13—PUBLIC ENEMY
(-) No. 1 contenders: ECW tag title
- 14—AL SNOW & UNIBOMB
(-) No. 1 contenders: Smoky Mountain tag title
- 15—THE GANGSTAS
(-) No. 2 contenders: Smoky Mountain tag title

These ratings are compiled by the editors with the assistance of promoters, wrestlers, and reporters around the country, and are based on won-lost records for the past month, quality of opposition, and the inherent skill of each wrestler. The number in parentheses indicates a wrestler's position in that category last issue; (-) indicates that the wrestler was not rated in that category last issue... "Most Popular" and "Most Hated" ratings are based on nationwide surveys of wrestling fans and on mail that comes to our offices ... Championships highlighted in bold on the "Roll Call Of Champions" have changed hands since our previous issue ... The information under the championship listing indicates the date that champion won the title, who the former champion was, and where the match took place.

For period ended March 30, 1995

ROLL CALL OF CHAMPIONS

ALL-JAPAN ASIAN TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: DAN KROFFAT & DOUG FURNAS
(September 9, 1993; from The Patriot & The Eagle; Omiya, Japan)

ALL-JAPAN INTERNATIONAL CHAMPION: STAN HANSEN
(March 4, 1995; from Toshiaki Kawada; Tokyo, Japan)

ALL-JAPAN JUNIOR HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: DAN KROFFAT
(July 12, 1994; from Masanobu Fuchi; Kagoshima, Japan)

ALL-JAPAN TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: MITSU HARU MISAWA & KENTA KOBASHI
(December 10, 1994; beat Johnny Ace & Steve Williams in tournament final; Tokyo, Japan)

ALL-JAPAN UNITED NATIONAL CHAMPION: STAN HANSEN
(March 4, 1995; from Toshiaki Kawada; Tokyo, Japan)

ALL-JAPAN WOMEN'S ALL-PACIFIC CHAMPION: MINAMI TOYOTA
(August 24, 1994; beat Yoko Inoue; Tokyo, Japan)

ALL-JAPAN WOMEN'S CHAMPION: KAORU ITO
(May 4, 1994; beat Rie Tamada in tournament final; Toda, Japan)

ALL-JAPAN WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL CHAMPION: AJA KONG
(November 26, 1992; from Bull Nakano; Kawasaki, Japan)

ALL-JAPAN WOMEN'S JUNIOR HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: CANDY OKUTSU
(December 6, 1993; from Chapparrita Asari; Osaka, Japan)

ALL-JAPAN WOMEN'S TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS:
MINAMI TOYOTA & TOSHIYO YAMADA
(December 6, 1993; from Dynamite Kansai & Mayumi Ozaki; Osaka, Japan)

ALL-STATE WRESTLING HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: TONY PRICHARD
(August 24, 1994; from Rick Cannon; Pigeon Forge, TN)

ALL-STATE WRESTLING TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: REGULATOR STEEL & REGULATOR STONE
(September 15, 1994; by forfeit, from Rick Connors & Lone Star; Maryville, TN)

AMERICAN COMMONWEALTH HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: T. RANTULA
(March 26, 1994; from Rip Sawyer; Johnsonburg, PA)

AMERICAN COMMONWEALTH LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: LORD ZOLTAN
(October 1, 1994; from Johnny Graham; Hamlet, PA)

AMERICAN COMMONWEALTH TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: THE BAD CREW
(September 30, 1993; title previously vacant; York, PA)

AMERICAN STATES WRESTLING HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: SCOTT SOMERS
(November 19, 1993; from Bo Dacious; Mansfield, OH)

ATLANTIC WRESTLING COUNCIL LIGHTWEIGHT CHAMPION: BOBBY ROGERS
(December 4, 1993; from Blare Rogers; Hollywood, FL)

ATLANTIC WRESTLING COUNCIL TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: T.J. JACKSON & THE MISER
(July 2, 1993; from American Scorpion & The Falcon; West Palm Beach, FL)

CENTURY WRESTLING ALLIANCE HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: TONY ATLAS
(December 4, 1993; from Vic Steamboat; Tewksbury, MA)

CONTINENTAL WRESTLING ALLIANCE HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: VIC STEAMBOAT
(October 23, 1993; from The Iron Sheik; Wakefield, MA)

CONTINENTAL WRESTLING ALLIANCE JUNIOR HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: RAY ODYSSEY
(October 23, 1993; from Flex Lavender; Wakefield, MA)

ECW HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: SHANE DOUGLAS
(March 26, 1994; from Terry Funk; Devon, PA)

ECW TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: CHRIS BENOIT & DEAN MALENKO
(February 25, 1995; from Sabu & Tasmaniac; Philadelphia, PA)

ECW TELEVISION CHAMPION: 2 COLD SCORPIO
(March 18, 1995; from Dean Malenko; Philadelphia, PA)

FLORIDA WRESTLING COUNCIL HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: BUTCH LONG
(January 6, 1995; from Navy Seal; Tampa, FL)

ICW HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: MIKE MAJORS
(December 31, 1994; beat Marc Ash; Wallace, NC)

ICW TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: MARC ASH & GEORGE SOUTH
(January 14, 1995; beat Mike Majors & George South; Atkinson, NC)

IWC HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: KONNAN
(April 2, 1994; from Cien Caras; Reynosa, Mexico)

IWGP CHAMPION: SHINYA HASHIMOTO
(May 1, 1994; from Tatum Fujiwara; Fukuoka, Japan)

IWGP INTERNATIONAL TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: HIROSHI HASE & THE GREAT MUTA
(November 25, 1994; from Kensuke Sasaki & Hawk; Iwate, Japan)

IWGP JUNIOR HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: KOJI KANEMOTO
(February 19, 1995; from Norio Honaga; Tokyo, Japan)

MID-EASTERN WRESTLING FEDERATION HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: CORPORAL PUNISHMENT
(March 26, 1995; from Mad Dog O'Malley; Essex, MD)

MID-EASTERN WRESTLING FEDERATION TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS:

JOHNNY GRAHAM & ROB NOXIOUS
(March 26, 1995; from Bulldozer Benton & J.R. Willett; Essex, MD)

MIDWEST TERRITORIAL WRESTLING HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: BRUISER BEDLAM
(January 21, 1995; beat Mickey Doyle; Taylor, MI)

MIDWEST TERRITORIAL WRESTLING TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS:
RAY ROBERTS & AL SNOW
(January 21, 1995; from Chris Carter & Mohammad Saad; Taylor, MI)

NWA HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: DAN SEVERN
(February 24, 1995; from Chris Candido; Erlanger, KY)

OSARK MOUNTAIN WRESTLING HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: CACTUS JACK
(March 20, 1995; from The Colorado Kid; Jonesboro, AR)

PACIFIC WRESTLING FEDERATION CHAMPION: STAN HANSEN
(March 4, 1995; from Toshiaki Kawada; Tokyo, Japan)

PACIFIC WRESTLING FEDERATION INTERNATIONAL TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS:
MITSU HARU MISAWA & KENTA KOBASHI
(December 10, 1994; beat Johnny Ace & Steve Williams in tournament final; Tokyo, Japan)

POWER ZONE WRESTLING ALLIANCE HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: BONECRUSHER STEVE
(January 15, 1995; from Psycho; Moore, OK)

PRO WRESTLING FEDERATION HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: TERRY AUSTIN
(March 4, 1995; from Italian Stallion; Hamlet, NC)

RIVER CITY WRESTLING HEAVYWEIGHT TITLE: MAX IMPACT
(October 27, 1994; from Tom Steele; Winnipeg, Manitoba)

SMOKY MOUNTAIN HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: BOBBY BLAZE
(February 26, 1995; from Jerry Lawler; Knoxville, TN)

SMOKY MOUNTAIN TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: THE ROCK 'N' ROLL EXPRESS
(December 25, 1994; from The Gangstas; Knoxville, TN)

TRI-STAR WRESTLING HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: RICHIE DYE
(January 13, 1995; won battle royal for vacant title; Rossville, GA)

TRI-STAR WRESTLING TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: KEITH HART & CHRIS STEELHEART
(January 6, 1995; from Roger Sartin & Jimmy Sharpe; Rossville, GA)

USWA HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: BILL DUNDEE
(February 25, 1995; from Jerry Lawler; Memphis, TN)

USWA SOUTHERN CHAMPION: BRIAN CHRISTOPHER
(December 31, 1994; from Tommy Rich; Memphis, TN)

USWA TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: PG-13
(March 13, 1995; from Doug Gilbert & Tommy Rich; Memphis, TN)

WCW TELEVISION CHAMPION: ARN ANDERSON
(January 8, 1995; from Johnny B. Badd; Atlanta, GA)

WCW U.S. CHAMPION: BIG VAN VADER
(December 27, 1994; from Hacksaw Duggan; Nashville, TN)

WCW WORLD CHAMPION: HULK HOGAN
(July 17, 1994; from Ric Flair; Orlando, FL)

WCW WORLD TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: HARLEM HEAT
(December 8, 1994; from The Patriot & Marcus Bagwell; Atlanta, GA)

WEST COAST CHAMPIONSHIP WRESTLING HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: JOHNNY CANUCK
(January 28, 1995; from The Bodyguard; Cloverdale, BC)

WINDY CITY WRESTLING LIGHTWEIGHT CHAMPION: STEVE BOZ
(November 5, 1994; from Christopher Daniels; Chicago, IL)

WORLD WIDE WRESTLING ALLIANCE TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: TITLE VACANT
(Most recently held by The Diamond Express)

WORLD WRESTLING ALLIANCE HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: NIKOLAI VOLKOFF
(February 4, 1995; from Frank Finnegan; Clementon, NJ)

WORLD WRESTLING ALLIANCE TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: BAD ATTITUDE
(November 5, 1994; from Duane & Wayne Gill; Clementon, NJ)

WWA FRONTIER MARTIAL ARTS CHAMPION: MR. ONITA
(September 19, 1992; from Tiger Jeet Singh; Yokohama, Japan)

WWF INTERCONTINENTAL CHAMPION: JEFF JARRETT
(January 22, 1995; from Razor Ramon; Tampa, FL)

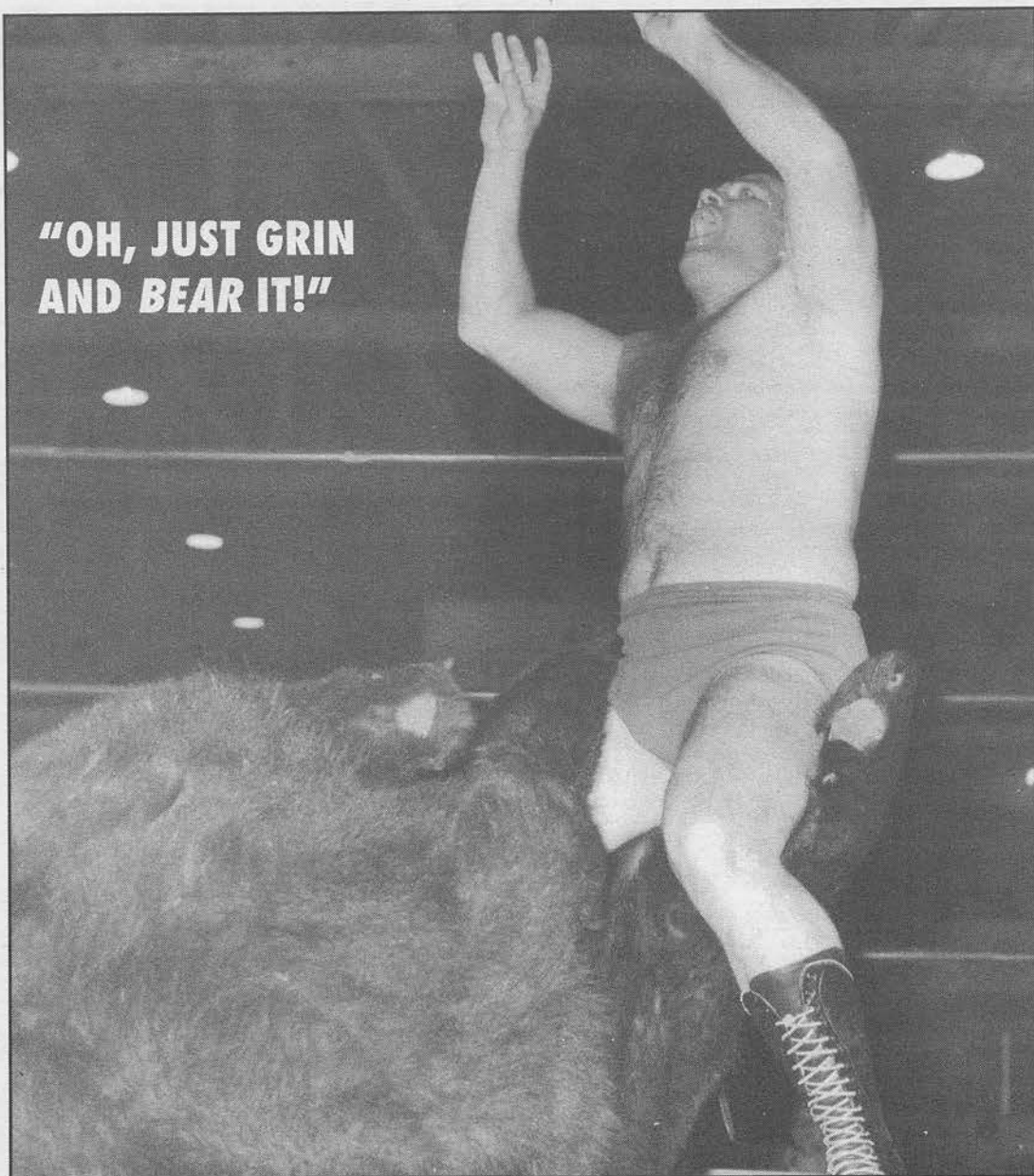
WWF WORLD WOMEN'S CHAMPION: BULL NAKANO
(November 20, 1994; from Alundra Blayze; Tokyo, Japan)

WWF WORLD CHAMPION: DIESEL
(November 26, 1994; from Bob Backlund; New York, NY)

WWF WORLD TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: THE SMOKIN' GUNNS
(January 23, 1995; from Bob Holly & The Kid; Palmetto, FL)

BLAST FROM THE PAST

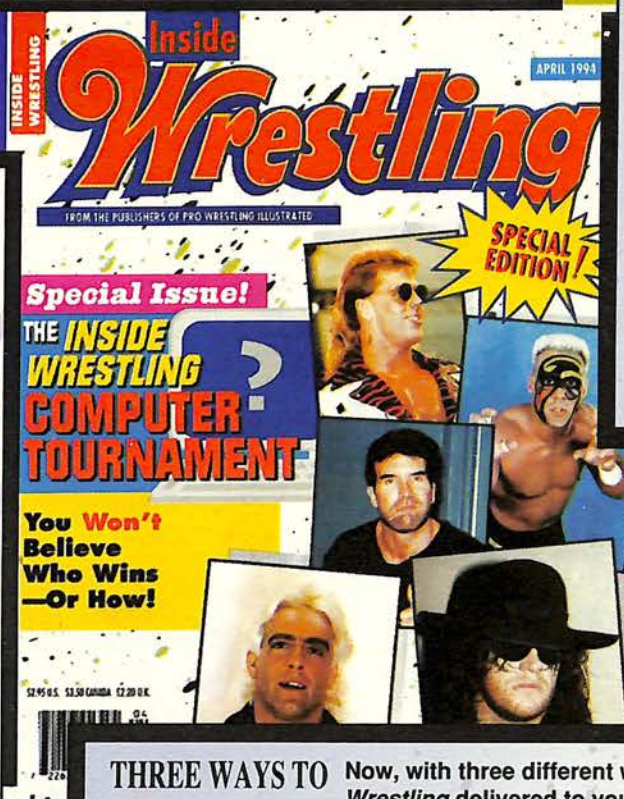
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